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No. CXLIV.]

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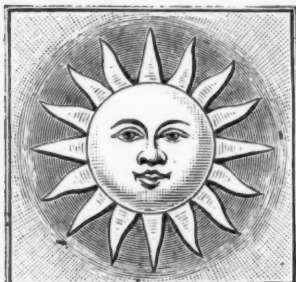
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The Matchmaker.

Human life is nought but error.—SCHILLER.

BY L. B. WALFORD.

CHAPTER XLVI.

A TERRIBLE MEETING-PLACE.

IT was midnight on the moor.

A full, brilliant moon lit up the rugged mountain range behind, and spread a silver sheet upon the wide expanse of waters below.

Not a sound broke the surrounding stillness. The hoarse croak of the raven and the quivering cry of the curlew were alike mute. Even the monotonous rhythm of plunging cataracts was so muffled as to be inaudible at any distance, a week of drought having dwindled every mountain stream.

It was a strange place for anyone to seek at that weird hour.

Who then could this be emerging from the larch wood which skirted the open hillside? Whose this form casting its black shadow behind as it flitted up the stony track?

A woman's?

But what woman would dare cross that wild and lonely pass at such a time? What purpose could be served by choosing the dead of night to sally forth alone among solitudes so awful?

Is it a moorland lassie? A fisher maiden? Ay, by the simple tartan plaid which clings around her shrinking figure and wraps her else uncovered head—no, by the dainty slipper already cut and torn through contact with the jagged roadway.

Bare hands held fast the folds of the plaid, but on the hands shone diamonds.

Penelope had not stopped to think about such things. She had caught up a covering, the first that lay near, more with the intent of concealing her person than as a protection from the elements, and had sallied forth otherwise unprepared.

But what could be the errand which had drawn a timid young girl to such a region, at such a time?

An appalling errand.

With a shock of horror Penelope had realised on becoming the involuntary witness of the last dreadful act of the day's tragedy—for so she divined it to be—that with the removal of all incriminating relics from among her cousin's possessions, she had accomplished only half her task, since it was but too probable that Torquil Macalister had his tell-tale treasures also.

Strange to say, with Torquil alive and at large, Penelope had not thought of this; it was only when the solitary shot upon the heights conveyed its own ominous interpretation to her brain, that she perceived the threatening of a new danger.

Torquil in his fury and madness had killed himself, failing to kill Redwood.

In Redwood he had beheld his supposed rival, a rival with whom he had no power to compete, and who he had doubtless found was looked upon by everyone as Lord Carnoustie's future son-in-law.

Rumours of this had probably reached him in his banishment; stung by the thought he had flung his word to the winds, and stealthily returned to see and hear for himself; Mina's representations had failed to satisfy him, and love and jealousy united in his savage breast had rendered him indifferent to everything but revenge.

Whether or not, had he succeeded in accomplishing this to its fullest extent, he might have put an end to his own life thereafter, would never be known; but, foiled in his second aim, he had in all probability fled, in order to await another opportunity; and, indeed, Penelope had, unknown to all, been shuddering over the frightful possibility awakened by this conjecture.

How should she warn Redwood? How tell him that his life

was thirsted for by a desperate man? Nay, that, but for her, he had already been lying cold and stiff as Mina was?

It had been with a transient sense of escape from peril dire and threatening that the terrified witness of Torquil's latest crime comprehended its full significance, and realised that, overmastered by his own dark thoughts, wild and mad with grief, and despairing of further vengeance, he had turned his weapon against his own heart, and put himself for ever beyond the reach of man.

No more was to be feared from him, no revelations, no accusations.

Had such taken place, they might of course have been passed off as the ravings of a madman; but how if supported by indisputable proof? Letters, for instance. It was at this instant that Penelope experienced the thrill of that new apprehension to which we have already alluded.

On the morrow Torquil's dead body would be found.

In the course of the evening she had heard, with perceptions rendered painfully acute, various projects for hunting down the criminal discussed by the functionaries who had assembled at the castle, and in whose presence she had supported her uncle.

The armed bands to be organised would naturally patrol the nearer portion of the moor where foot-passengers were frequent. And as the knoll on which the suicide had fallen was well in sight of the beaten track, he would be perceived instantly.

Then how if no one had been beforehand with the searchers?

That Torquil had been oftentimes indifferent to, nay, reckless of, discovery, Penelope had only too good reason to know already; for while Mina had been abjectly terrified by the mere possibility of detection, his ignorance and presumption had made it by no means unendurable in his eyes. Mina had owned he had spoken of another country, and a fresh start in life; and he had more than once acted as though self-effacement and concealment were becoming too irksome. To be bought off by a miserable father, and sent to the antipodes with his wife—even though sent in anger and disgrace—had naturally seemed a more satisfactory prospect to the low-born rustic than to Lord Carnoustie's daughter, and it was quite likely that he had returned to the island prepared to face it. If so, prudence would be the last thing to be expected, and everything the hapless Mina had ever given or written, everything he had cared to keep, would be found upon his person.

The thought was torture, but Penelope could see no escape from it.

Torquil Macalister lay dead upon a spot whereof she alone knew at the present moment,—but all the world would know it on the morrow.

After that, every hope of preserving untarnished poor Mina's name must be abandoned; and the coarse tongues of the vulgar would not only blazon the tale far and wide, and hand it down to generations yet unborn, but would cast upon her folly inferences and interpretations such as the weak, erring girl had never dreamed of.

Penelope groaned aloud. She, and she alone, was the guardian of her dead cousin's fair fame. On her it rested to preserve it or let it go. But what an enterprise did such a conviction now demand!

She *must* go—she *could* not. She would dare anything—she dared not this thing. Now she would start upright, and clench her teeth resolute, courageous; anon she would sink down despairing, weeping, wringing her hands.

Finally, on her knees she fell.

After that Penelope seemed to apprehend nothing distinctly till she found herself out in the great shining space, beneath the midnight sky.

If it had been darker she could have borne it better; there would not have been visible those fantastic shapes which challenged terror and inquiry on every hand; there would not have been her own black shadow dogging her steps.

Nay, until she stood out upon the open moor she had got on fairly well. The wood was often dark even in the daytime, and she was not by nature of a nervously timorous disposition; so that even now she had traversed its windings running swiftly and striving to keep her thoughts where they had last been directed in prayer; but it was harder to keep her eyes from straying and her heart from racing when the nature of the ground made it a necessity to slacken speed; added to which there was the sense of being engulfed by a vast empty space, whence at any moment might spring phantoms, creatures of the night. Ha! did not something then go by?

It seemed years since she had put the same question on the shore road. She had been startled then, apprehensive of she knew not what,—but now, she stood still,—she was within sight

of the knoll, and on the knoll—yes—there was—there was—the *thing* she sought!

Penelope clasped her hands across her breast. Her eyes dilated; she could have seen *that* at twice the distance.

And now to leave the track and approach her goal.

For a few moments she stayed her panting steps, and strove to reanimate her courage by all the arguments which had erst inspired it; then slowly and falteringly began to creep across the heather and moss heaps.

Suppose it were not Torquil after all who lay there. Suppose her whole theory had been built upon a baseless foundation; and if it were indeed the murderer, he were only resting on his heathery bed, still harbouring dread intentions in his breast, still prepared to fill up the measure of his crimes. Her own had been the hand which turned aside his deadly aim at Redwood, and with his vengeance on Redwood yet unsated, would he be likely to spare her if she were now to throw herself unprotected into his power?

The dark object on the height showed no signs of life.

Penelope closed her eyes for a moment. 'I am sure God sees me now,' she whispered to herself, 'and though I have been wrong, and foolish, and self-willed, and have helped to bring about all this, He has forgiven me, and is pleased with this one poor little act of atonement. He may suffer me to be frightened, that I deserve; but I do not think He will allow any real harm to come to me.'

Then she stumbled on a few steps, and hit a loose stone with her foot, and it fell clattering down the hillside.

How loud was its sharp, ringing, noisy progress! Loud enough to—O God!—to raise—to wake—the *dead*!

For, apparently roused by the disturbance, there started up on the instant, full in view of her affrighted vision, the apparition of a man; and with a shriek such as had never before rent the wild echoes of that lonely place, Penelope reeled, tottered, and fell heavily on the turf.

But it was not Torquil Macalister either alive or dead who arose from the purple heather.

Torquil still lay there stretched on his wild bed, with a bullet through his heart, his cold hand clutching the instrument of his own destruction. It was some one else who had been on the ground beside the lifeless body, who was the next instant bending over the unconscious girl, and who could himself only find voice for the single word 'Penelope!'

Redwood knew however, as by a lightning flash of revelation, what had brought Penelope thither, and that her mission was the same as his own. She had seen what he had seen; she had been quick as he to interpret its meaning and to apprehend its significance; and like himself she had resolved to protect, at whatever cost, the fair fame of Mina Carnoustie.

Every word uttered by the murdered girl had burned itself into Redwood's brain, more especially every word about Penelope. Penelope loved him, and for Mina's sake had put her love aside? That was naturally uppermost in the whirling chaos of his thoughts, but he recollected also that Penelope alone knew of Mina's fatal attachment, and that Penelope alone held the key to what seemed in the eyes of others an outbreak of pure insanity on the part of Mina's destroyer.

Yet to meet Penelope thus!

The covering fell from Penelope's head, and her countenance, white as death, dismayed Redwood by its ecstasy of terror.

'Good God!' he exclaimed, 'is this to be another victim? Penelope, my darling,' raising her in his arms, 'open your eyes. Look at me. You know who it is. I—your friend. I startled you, and no wonder, meeting you thus; but now—no one shall harm you—no one. I am here. I will protect you; that is right; look at me. You understand who it is, don't you? Never mind the rest; think only you are safe with me, poor child—poor, poor child! To think of your attempting this—you brave, noble girl. . . . It is over now,—yes look up; you know it is I, don't you?' soothing her with his touch. 'Ah, don't draw away. You cannot stand alone, indeed you cannot; let me hold you. Nay, you must; you don't know what you are doing,' as, still half stupefied, and wholly bewildered, she kept feebly endeavouring to free herself.

'Dear,' said Redwood, taking both her hands in his, and speaking slowly and distinctly as to a young child, 'will you try to understand? I love you, and I am here to protect you. You are no longer alone; you are with me.'

She trembled from head to foot, and cast a shuddering glance over her shoulder.

'Yes, he lies there,' said Redwood, divining her thoughts, 'he will never move again, poor fellow. It was as well he killed himself; there was nothing else left for him to do, and we who know his story——' he paused, significantly.

She started, all attention. He was right; he had struck home at last.

'Let me fold this round you'—his arm remained within the encircling fold—'come from this fearful place,' pleaded Redwood, 'we are no longer needed; I had accomplished what I came to do some minutes before you appeared; but I lingered to make assurance doubly sure; now, come,' and he gently strove to draw her away, but she tottered and would have fallen, while her mute eyes sought his with a gaze of agonised appeal.

'Yes?' said Redwood, meeting it.

Then Penelope essayed to speak, but only broken and inarticulate murmurs escaped her lips. Still she looked restlessly, piteously, while the unsatisfied misery in her eyes for the moment baffled his conjectures. At last 'I have it!' thought he, and produced from his breast-pocket a small packet wrapped in a coloured handkerchief wet with blood.

'Everything is here,' he whispered, '*everything*. Not a trace will be found for the tongues of strangers to gossip over. You wish me to give it you?' reluctantly (for she had held out her hand). 'Will it not do if I promise to destroy every fragment, to burn it all, the instant I get home? I will look at nothing, open nothing. Believe me this packet is safer with me than with you; and if you can trust me——'

She made a gesture of assent.

'You are satisfied—quite satisfied?'

Another movement.

'Then let me take you home now? If we wait,' he scanned the moor on every side, 'others as well as we may have had their attention drawn to this spot; and should you and I be found here together——'

A crimson flush overspread her pallid countenance, and he felt that consciousness and perception were returning.

'Already I fancy I see something. There, on the crest of the hill,' proceeded he, with a pardonable wile. 'It may be only cattle, but we are not secure of—you would not wish to be found here,' speaking low in her ear, 'alone with me?'

Her head fell lower. She made a hurried movement, and half fell in the attempt.

'Indeed you are not fit to walk,' urged Redwood, tendering support. 'You have already strained your strength too far. Ah, take care!' as she stumbled over a loose stone, 'may I not? Well, try; but I know you cannot,' standing back for a minute.

She made a few feeble steps, and came to a dizzy standstill, putting her hand before her eyes.

'It is useless to attempt it,' said Redwood. 'Dear, you must not be angry with me, but you must submit to me now. Your heart is too full to listen to my love,'—he paused,—'but I shall claim to tell it presently. Now, will you obey me? Yes?' his arm pressing closely around her. 'Yes? Ah, say "Yes," Penelope, dear Penelope! I can't do anything till you say "Yes."'

'Yes,' she sobbed. He stooped his head over hers for an instant; when he raised it his eyes were shining proudly. 'Now, one moment,' he said, loosening the long plaid scarf from her person, and hastily passing it across his own shoulders, then winding it again around her, whilst she appeared only half-conscious of the action. 'Now put your arms round my neck,' said Redwood, bending his head. Quick, as he felt her hesitate. 'We may be surprised if we linger; every minute is precious; and,' softly, 'you promised to obey me—'

First one arm and then the other slowly crept round. He put up his hand and linked them together. 'Hold firmly, and I can carry you with ease.' Redwood then lifted his fair burden from the ground; and twisting the plaid tightly round her and himself, and bringing it round again to the front—as he had seen mountaineers do when carrying helpless animals—he found her weight nothing, and easily regained the beaten track.

After a few minutes' hurried walking a light whisper was breathed into his ear. 'Mr. Redwood?'

He stopped to hear more plainly.

'Are they coming?'

'They? Who, my darling?'

'Those people you spoke of. Are they there? Will they see us?'

He had forgotten to what she alluded, but, after a moment's reflection, turned and looked back. In the glittering moonlight every broken bit of moorland, every ragged and fantastic outline was clearly discernible for some distance, but no living object was in sight.

'No one is there, Penelope.'

'You would take care of me, would you not? You would not let them find us?'

'Are you my own Penelope?'

She breathed quickly. He felt she understood.

'Be sure I will protect my own,' said Redwood, lifting a hand to adjust the covering which had fallen from her shoulder. 'All the world does not matter, now that you have given yourself to

me. Do not be afraid; we are still alone—quite alone,' in spite of himself there was a ring of exultation in the whispered assurance. 'Be content. You are safe. You are *mine*,' and he walked rapidly on.

Soon they regained the edge of the wood, and plunging within its sheltering recesses, it seemed as though half the terror of the night were left behind.

'We are close at hand now,' murmured Penelope, to whom life was slowly coming back. 'I could walk now——'

'Hush! hush! You shall walk presently. Lie still but a few minutes more,' the rapid descent continuing. 'You are so easy to carry,' proceeded Redwood, whose height and strength made the remark perfectly true. 'And we get on so much faster thus.'

'But they will see us from the castle. There are lights. There are people still watching——'

'Ay, I had not thought of that;' he drew up, and paused to consider. 'How are you to get in? Do they know—does anyone know you are out? How did you get out?'

'By the little side-door—Ailsie's door; Ailsie knows. She—oh, Mr. Redwood, let me go—let me go in alone,' unlocking her hands; 'if Ailsie were to see anyone with me, most of all if she were to see you——'

Redwood stooped his head lower. 'Tell me,' he said significantly, 'does she—the nurse—*know*?'

'Yes.' Penelope wept a little, then proceeded. 'We never spoke of it. We—but I had to tell her at last. When I came out to-night I had to tell her, for I could not have left the castle without her help. She is waiting for me. It was the only thing I could do——'

'I understand. Well,' he set her down gently. 'Try if you have the strength. It is but a few yards; you might manage it, perhaps,' for they were on the rustic bridge below the lawn. 'How do you feel? Shall I take away my arm?'

The next thing Penelope knew, she was lying on the couch within Ailsie's little parlour, voices were speaking softly to each other over her head, and there was a bright light in her eyes.

CHAPTER XLVII.

L'HONNEUR DU NOM.

'SHE will do now,' said Redwood, rising from his kneeling posture. 'Thank you, nurse, I don't think she will need any more of that at present. By-and-by, perhaps, but not now. Help me to lay her down more comfortably. There; we will let her lie still for a few minutes,' and he stood up and looked around.

He knew the place; Ailsie's own quiet little retreat. He had been graciously made welcome there on more than one occasion of late.

On this night a light had been placed in the window, and the same had streamed through the little side-door indicated by Penelope, so that in approaching thither he had been prepared to find it ajar. All the rest of the grey pile was shrouded in darkness, and not a glimmer marked even the casement of the death-chamber. The nurse had been forced to abandon her watch, and to none durst she confess as much, or entrust it in her stead.

Redwood, bearing his helpless burden, had thus effected his entrance to the castle unobserved by all but Mrs. Alison, who seemed almost beyond the reach of surprise or dismay, and he had postponed explanations until by their united efforts he and Ailsie had succeeded in restoring Penelope to animation. He felt, however, that the time for these had now come.

He walked to the fireplace; it was one mass of glowing red-hot coals.

'A good time and a good place,' muttered he to himself, thinking of the blood-stained packet which Penelope had been so feverishly anxious to possess, and to obtain which she had dared so much,—and he put his hand in his breast pocket.

The hateful thing was there; it bulged out.

It had given him a pang, after lifting his precious burden in his arms, to feel when too late that he had laid her just over the place where it was, and where she might, if she thought of doing so, feel it. He would be glad to rid himself of such a possession; and it might—yes, it might satisfy Penelope's still dim and confused apprehensions more fully, were she to see it destroyed with her own eyes.

'Maister Redwood,' said a trembling voice behind, 'if you please, sir, to tak' a glass of wine? It is—what his lordship drinks. I thocht Miss Penelope might need it.'

Redwood turned round. He did not want wine; he loathed the thought of it; but there was something in the suppressed voice, in the stern self-control of the rigid figure, in the dry eyes, and most of all in the pathetic attempt at hospitality—he hastily poured himself out a glass full.

‘I fear, sir, you have had a hard day of it. We that are in trouble suld na forget the requirements of others. If there were onythin’ I could get ye? ’Deed it’s no that late, an though Hyslop’s to his bed——’

‘No, thank you; no, thank you. Nothing more.’

‘Tak’ a seat, sir, ye’re standing a’ the time. An ye hae been up and down the countryside doin’ oor wark—tak’ a seat,’ proffering one with her own hand.

‘Pray don’t, Mrs. Alison;’ Redwood moved uneasily. How should he obtain the necessary opening?

‘I ken ye hae been on oor ain errands;’ the speaker wiped her dry lips to conceal their quivering. He interrupted her abruptly.

‘You would like to know what my last errand has been, and I am anxious to inform you. Shall it be now—at once?’

‘As ye please, sir.’ Ah me! how the old face worked! ‘Trouble comes whaur the Lord sends it, and sair, sair is the trouble that has befaun this hoose the day! But, sir,’ the wrinkled hand twitched restlessly up and down, ‘sir—Mr. Redwood—ye ken there’s waur than sorrow; an’ gif it suld please Him to spare the auld family—the auld bluid—frae *disgrace*——’

‘It shall be saved,’ said Redwood, laying his hand upon her shoulder. ‘No finger shall point at her who is gone. No foul tongue shall be let loose by the terrible events of this day. She is dead,—but she shall rest quiet in her grave. If—’ and he glanced towards the couch whereon Penelope lay panting with large eyes, and a damp, dewy brow, ‘if I have permission, I will give you ample proof of my ability to fulfil this promise. Before I do so, however, we ought to make sure of one thing,’ and he stepped to the door, and carefully drew the bolt; ‘we are not likely to be disturbed, but still——’

‘Let me steek¹ the outer door, sir, first. We’re no likely, as you say,—but folks aye do what’s no likely; and seein’ lights burnin’, they micht come ben,’ and she passed outside.

Redwood seized the opportunity, and was by the sofa in an instant.

¹ Fasten.

'You are sure she knows all? We shall be making no mistake in letting her share our secret.'

'She knows,' said Penelope, with a deep sigh. 'Oh yes, she knows.'

'From the first?'

'I—think so. What are you—going to do—Mr. Redwood?' faltering.

For answer he drew her gently to an upright position and placed a cushion at her back. 'Watch,' he whispered, and turned again to the fireplace. Ailsie had entered ere he finished the arrangement.

'I believe,' said Redwood, turning to her, and resolved upon emulating the fixed composure of her demeanour, though he could scarcely prevent a slight tremor of the voice, 'I believe we all know what we have to fear. There had been a foolish episode'—he paused; then resumed hurriedly, 'we need not allude to it. You, nurse, know what it was.'

'Na, Maister Redwood.'

On a sudden Ailsie set her face like a flint, a suspicion hitherto unfelt having entered her breast. Was she to be interrogated? Would they attempt to draw more out of her than they already knew? Who were they—these strangers—to pry into the secrets of the Carnousties? Anyhow she would admit nothing, and communicate nothing. 'Na, Maister Redwood; it's no me that kenned. Tell me what ye will; but me, I kenned naethin', she muttered, 'naethin' at a'."

'Indeed?' said he, surprised, 'but I thought, I imagined——' He looked towards Penelope, wondering if he had gone too far.

'Ailsie, surely you said you knew,' murmured she wearily.

Ailsie shook her head.

'Do you not recollect,' urged Penelope with a gesture half imploring, half impatient, 'how when I came downstairs to-night, and told you I must go up there—to that dreadful place—you said you knew what I had need to go for?'

'Said I yon?' The old woman affected to consider. 'Aweel, I micht. But the Lord forgie me if I said *she* tell't me, for ne'er a whisht¹ had I frae her.'

'Oh no, dear Ailsie, *that* I knew; but I supposed that you, like me, had found it out for yourself.'

'Did I? I kenna. I'm no sayin'.' Still the withered hand worked ceaselessly up and down, while Redwood bit his lip in

¹ Whispher.

perplexity; for without more to go upon than this, how was he to proceed?

But this deadlock on the part of the two others was Penelope's restoration to life and activity of mind. Had no more been required of her, she might have remained passive, as in a dream. The present dilemma roused her faculties afresh.

'Mr. Redwood need not be afraid,' she said bravely; 'he may say anything and do anything for our dear Mina's sake before us two. And, Mr. Redwood,' inspired by the courage of the moment, and fearful of its again escaping, 'will you just tell me one thing first? How did *you* know where to go, and what to look for to-night?'

'She told me,' said Redwood, looking down. 'She lived only just long enough to confide to me her sad story. She was perfectly conscious, and, though fast sinking, could speak intelligibly.'

Both his hearers held their breath to listen.

'Kenned she by whae's hand she fell?' whispered the nurse at last. Her parched lips could scarcely articulate the question.

'She did. She knew. And she forgave. She pronounced his name—Torquil Macalister—and, whilst she owned that he was her murderer, she strove to excuse his vile deed. She said it was a case of——'

'What?' cried they in a breath. 'What?'

'Love and jealousy,' said Redwood, not looking at them. 'She frankly avowed that this villain had dared to lift his eyes to her, and she had permitted him. She also spoke of you,' he added, turning to Penelope, 'and kindly—with great affection and gratitude. I will tell you all another time. She left a message for you.'

A deep flush overspread Penelope's cheek at the words; she could divine the import of such a message at such a moment.

'And she tell't you a'?' exclaimed Ailsie with a sort of shuddering gasp. 'Aweel, maybe it's for the best. Maister Redwood, sir, ye'll bear nae grudge——'

She caught a warning glance from Penelope.

'I mean—ahem!—I'm no thinkin' what I say. Ye'll think nae ill o' the puir misguided bairn. She's had to dree her weird—wae's me!—to dree her weird; an it's a' ower noo—ower for ever-mair . . . but, eh, that she suld hae forgi'en him!' and the tears which had been restrained till now flowed over her aged cheeks at the thought.

'I gathered that this unhappy business had been going on for some time past,' said Redwood, taking refuge in a formal mode of expression, 'so that directly I had time to think, I came at

once to the conclusion that the fellow would in all probability have about him some very—very unfortunate possessions. I was actually pondering this over, and wondering what would be the result should he be arrested with them on his person (when, of course, they would have been produced in court), when I heard that shot upon the moor! Had the night not been so absolutely clear and fine, I might never have observed it, and certainly should never have found the place whence it proceeded; but, as it happened, the moon was shining full upon that little knoll, and I recollected our once going there together—he turned with a softened accent towards Penelope, whose eyes, fixed upon him, sank at this—‘and your saying in jest that if anything ever took place on the island, it was invariably upon that spot. I had been puzzled what you could mean—or whether you meant anything.’ He paused.

‘I did; but I—I cannot tell you.’ She recalled a bitter gibe she had dealt on one of her bad days—a day when Mina had been unusually gay and, to all appearance, triumphing in her new lover—and which it gave her now a pang to think of.

‘By starting off at once,’ proceeded Redwood in the matter-of-fact narrative tone he had adopted, ‘I knew I should be beforehand with the Fiscal’s people, who, even if they had noticed anything, would wait till daylight to make their investigations; so I did not delay a moment, and was at the knoll, and had completed my search before I was disturbed. You know the rest,’ to Penelope, ‘and now’—he slowly drew forth the crumpled and discoloured packet from his breast pocket; Ailsie uttered a faint ejaculation, but Penelope, with thirsty eyes, sat up and watched in silence—‘it might be as well to undo it, to make sure there is nothing we have no right to,’ muttered Redwood to himself, and he untied the knotted handkerchief.

A small bundle of letters—principally scraps, all torn and shattered—fell out. There was a piece of blue and silver ribbon—(Penelope had once admired the ribbon in poor Mina’s soft flaxen hair)—and a large cabinet photograph torn almost in half, and burnt at the edges. The life-blood of the wretched man dyed every page. He had placed the muzzle of his gun so as to pierce through all.

Not a word was spoken. The little clock upon the mantel-piece ticked solemnly on, its hands pointing to the small hours of the morning.

Redwood looked from one to another as demanding their

attention, then stepped to the fireplace, placed upon the glowing mass the collected fragments, and in an instant they were in a flame.

'This, too,' whispered Penelope at his elbow, and she held towards him what he full well guessed to be the counterpart of the fatal packet. Without looking at her, he laid it where the other had been, and the flames devoured as before.

There was still the brooch, but she put it back into her bosom; it could easily be disposed of, dropped in some lonely depth of water; in itself it revealed nothing. She alone knew to whom it had belonged, and by whom given.

A sigh of relief burst from her lips, and she sank back upon the little couch with strength almost exhausted. Redwood, leaning against the mantelpiece, thoughtfully, his back towards her, seemed to have forgotten for an instant where he was.

On a sudden the little clock rang out two shrill notes, and he started from his reverie.

'It is very late,' he said quickly. 'I ought not to keep you longer, but——' then he walked across the room and took the old nurse by the hand. 'Will you do me a favour?' he said. 'Leave us for a few moments? I will not ask longer, I assure you; but before we part to-night——' Ailsie passed into the inner room and shut the door.

A mist swam before Penelope's eyes. She only knew that Redwood was kneeling by her side, his voice in her ear, his hand on hers. 'I was very presumptuous,' he murmured, 'and may have assumed too much up there on the hillside. Time pressed, and I was forced to be imperious; to take for granted anything that would warrant—but now I want my answer. Dear—give it me. You know what it is I ask of you. One word—one little word—and I could trust you for time and eternity—but give me that word. Put your hand in mine'—he loosed it and put it away from him—'and tell me you will be true?'

'True?' But then Penelope faintly smiled. She remembered.

The moment before she had thought she could not speak, but now she thought '*I will speak*;' and drew a long shivering breath, and her lips parted.

'Poor child, it is cruel to ask you——'

'Ask me—anything.'

'Nay, then I will ask nothing,' said Redwood, his heart bounding. 'All's said in that, dearest—dearest. The compact's sealed. One kiss, and I will go. You have already had far too

much to bear to-night.' Again his head bent low to hers, and in another few minutes he laid her gently down upon the pillow, and rose and went to the door. Ailsie came out at his summons.

'My dear, kind friend,' said Redwood, 'here is one over whom you must watch very carefully. She is too young to have had such a strain put upon her as she has been through in these last hours. Think what she has had to see and to do to-day! Some day I hope—I trust—happiness may come to her once more; but she will never, I fear, lose this one terrible memory; and *you* know how much of it has been brought upon herself by her own noble, courageous undertaking. She is going to be my wife,'—he paused, and in spite of himself his eyes lit up at the words; 'we have been united in this sorrowful scene; give us your good wishes that we may live to blot it out with happier ones.' He wrung her hand, unwilling further to obtrude his own anticipations at such a time.

But Ailsie had schooled herself for this. 'Noo that there's nane to hinner,' she murmured as though to herself, 'noo that I ken a', and it's ower, ower for evermair,'—then aloud, with solemn emphasis, 'The Lord bless ye and keep ye, the Lord mak' His face to shine upon ye, an' gie ye peace! Eh! ma bairns, ma bairns! Eh! that this day suld ha' come to the prood, prood hoose o' Carnoustie!' Sobs choked further utterance.

To give her a moment for recovery, Redwood turned to bid Penelope farewell.

'There is one thing more,' he whispered. 'It shall be for you to say when this is to be made known. It would be cruel to make any announcement at present——'

'Oh! don't, don't.' She perceived in a moment.

'I will not. Not a word. You understand, nurse,' looking round. 'Not a word of this to Lord and Lady Carnoustie. Their sorrow must be respected'—all knew what he meant—'and till I have the right to take this dear hand,' continued Redwood, laying on it his own, 'from the only person who can claim the honour to give it me, I will forego my privileges. You shall have nothing to fear from my imprudence, darling;' in a whisper, 'You have taught me to think of others; you shall see how I have learned the lesson.'

She bowed her head in silence. No voice broke that silence, only the sound of broken-hearted weeping was audible in the background.

Redwood knelt down. How long he knelt there, holding in his arms the beloved, unresisting form so newly his own, nor he nor she knew. Such moments are not to be counted.

But at length, with a sigh, and one long last embrace, he rose, for the time to part had come, and go he must. Ailsie was nowhere to be seen; so, without daring to trust his resolution further, he undid the doors, and softly closed them behind him; his step was heard on the gravel outside; in another few minutes it died away, and all was still.

The day was over—over at last.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

CONCLUSION.

WEEKS passed, and every day up the turret staircase which led to Penelope's room there came the tramp of the doctor's heavy feet.

Penelope was very ill.

It would have been almost against nature if she had not been so. Day followed night, and night followed day; and still the tender young life hung in the balance, baffling every care and every modern resource.

A learned physician was summoned from Edinburgh at the instance of Dr. McWhinnock; but he could only confirm that worthy's own treatment, and opinion that time alone could work a perfect cure. He was able, however, to hold out hopes and quiet the worst apprehensions.

With perfect rest, and the most absolute freedom from every species of excitement, the patient stood a good chance of ultimate recovery. More he could not say. She had youth in her favour—youth and, as he understood, previous health and good habits—too much value could not be laid upon these in a case of the kind; but it was impossible to speak with absolute decision, and poor Lord Carnoustie, who had accompanied the black-coated authority to the door, hanging on his lips as though he were a very messenger from Heaven, went back to the dining-room with a dull pain at his heart; and, refusing to communicate even the little he knew, pushed aside everything offered him, and finally burst into a scolding fit of such unexampled and uncalled-for ferocity that Louisa wept, and Joanna fled before it.

Where was Lady Carnoustie? In her presence no such scene would ever have been enacted.

Alas! Lady Carnoustie would never again check with her frown either husband or child.

Lady Carnoustie was a quiet, pleasant, smiling old woman now, not very sure who all the kind people were who ministered to her wants so thoughtfully; not at all concerned about the manner in which one would vanish as another appeared, one come in at the door as the other went out; and only a little surprised now and then that her daughter Mina did not take her turn with the rest, and sit in the armchair by the bedside for a chat.

When told that Mina was not in the house she was quite satisfied. It was so good for dear little Mina to be out of doors.

Would she send her love to Penelope? Oh yes, dear Penelope—but who, who was Penelope?

Lady Carnoustie had had a stroke of paralysis, and though she might ultimately regain a portion of health and intelligence, it was quite understood that memory was gone, and that the past with her must now be for ever a blank.

It was best so; even in the midst of their distress the afflicted family could tell each other it was best so; for they now knew all, and it was this knowledge and not the shock of Mina's awful death which had bereft Mina's mother of her senses.

But how came it that the secret which Penelope had risked so much to conceal, and of which she and Redwood believed all evidence destroyed, had transpired?

Were not they and Ailsie alone cognisant of its existence? And had not every scrap and fragment of writing, every illicit treasure and love-token, been burnt to ashes?

They thought so, and with a wearied spirit in a measure at peace, Penelope had laid herself down upon her bed at last, feeling that, horrible as had been the double crime committed, some of its horrors at least had been spared coming to the light, through her and her lover's means; but there is an old saying, 'A chain is only as strong as its weakest link,' and one weak link in the present chain of evidence had been overlooked. Penelope had forgotten the letter at the village post-office.

Mercifully, so did others until the day after the funeral.

Up to that date Lord and Lady Carnoustie, albeit overwhelmed with sorrow, were yet able to bear their parts in the mournful duties of the occasion—the grief-stricken mother even surprising those about her by her resolute efforts after self-control and submission to the will of Heaven. 'My poor wife bears up wonderfully!' had been again and again on Lord Carnoustie's lips; and

he had conceived a respect for her and a tenderness towards her during those few days which he was thankful afterwards to be able to look back upon.

For the grave had scarcely closed, the flowers were yet fresh upon its surface, when a messenger was sent to Ailsie's room with an imperative summons at which the old woman's heart gave a sudden bound. She could not recollect ever before being thus sent for.

Instinctively she divined that this had nothing to do with Penelope; for though she was nursing Penelope—taking precaution that no ears but her own should listen to the wandering babble which ceaselessly issued from the parched lips—all inquiries, though as solicitous as could have been desired on the part of her master and mistress, had been made without the need for a personal interview. No, it was not on Penelope's account that Lady Carnoustie desired her attendance now.

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, her shrewd penetration divined the worst, directly she opened the door of the room in which Lady Carnoustie awaited her. Lady Carnoustie was standing. On the hearthrug in front of her stood her husband. Neither daughter was present.

'They've fun' it oot,' whispered the faithful servant to herself, every limb shaking. 'Gude help them! they've fun' it oot!'

Then she closed the door carefully, and walked close up to the other two. In a short time they had learned all she had to tell—all at least that had reference to the tragedy of their child's life and death.

It is not our purpose to dwell upon the emotions which such a revelation induced; nor, indeed, would it be possible in mere words to depict the amazement, the incredulity, the agony of consternation and bewilderment which, ranged on one side, were confronted by one speechless, incontrovertible witness on the other. A common, vulgar love letter—such a love letter as might indeed harmlessly have been indited to a village beauty by her illiterate swain, but which, when addressed to their own daughter, to the loved one for whose untimely end they were in the first anguish of sorrow—and penned, moreover, by the hand which had ruthlessly destroyed her—was horrible beyond the power of speech to express—this was the weapon against which resistance and defence were alike useless.

To explain it, in the last wild hope that it might admit of explanation, Ailsie had been summoned; and what would not she

have given to have been able to protest that the confident strain of love requited was but the outpouring of a mind diseased; that Mina had never known of the madman's delusion, but had yielded up her life its innocent victim?

She could not say this. Perhaps, who knows, she might;—she would have said much, said almost anything on behalf of the old race whose honour, whose very life-blood was esteemed her own—but of what avail were falsehood? A simple inquiry at the village post-office would blow her testimony to the winds. Recollecting the packets destroyed by Redwood and Penelope, she could not doubt that this clandestine missive was only one of many—many both received and answered; and realising that the worst had come, she stood upright and told all, concluding with these words: 'My lord an' my leddy, listen to me. Mebbe it's no for me to speak—it's no for the likes o' me to cast up aught that's come an' gane to the likes o' you—but it's the Lord's truth ye hae heard this day; and may the Lord Himsel' help ye baith to bear it! Ask me what mair ye will; I'm here to answer. I did what I could, an' there's them wha did what I couldna—but there was nane could save her, sin' yersels had made her what she was. She micht hae been a guid bairn, the joy o' yer hearts, the croon o' yer auld age—she micht hae been a mither hersel', wi' a hame and a husband o' her ain—she micht hae been alive an' weel this day, gif she had been let to be what the Lord made her, an' let to live the life He made her for. . . . A pause. . . . 'Ye best ken wha turned her frae it. Wha quenched a' the light in her bit breast as a lassie; wha garred her be silent when she wad fain hae spoken oot,—garred her be guid, when she was no guid,—garred her mak' believe she was content, when her heart was angered and sore. She was to ken naethin', think o' naethin', care for naethin' but what ye thocht fit. She was to tak' up wi' naebody,—ne'er came ane to the hoose o' her ain rank——'

'There at least you are wrong,' broke in Lord Carnoustie in a loud, hoarse voice. 'Mr. Redwood——'

'Redwood?' Ailsie laughed a bitter laugh. 'Redwood? Na! She was past Redwood afore he came. The iron had entered into her saul; and she was fain to fling hersel' awa, to be revenged, if for naethin' mair. Aye, it was revenge—it mun hae been revenge,' she muttered to herself. 'A Carnoustie could stoop to revenge, but no to love.'

Lord Carnoustie seized her by the arm and shook it. 'What more do you know, woman? Speak, in God's name, and hide

nothing; do you not see that she,' pointing to a motionless figure sitting stiffly upright with fixed, wide-open eyes, 'that she——' The speaker's accents died away.

Both were aware of a terrible new turn of events, and both alike sprang forward;—but too late.

There was one loud bursting sigh, one blind involuntary movement, and Lady Carnoustie lay stretched upon the floor.

She never recovered the full use of her reason; never reverted to the above scene, nor seemed to retain any recollection of it; though, after a period of time, a certain amount of restoration was otherwise effected in her health.

It was felt, as we have said, that the stroke which deprived her of memory, and limited her intelligence, was even in its intensity a merciful one.

It was now very reasonably Lord Carnoustie's chief anxiety to learn whether the mystery of his daughter's death had been unriddled by the world at large; and he was comforted more than he would have dared avouch, by finding—or fancying—as time passed, that nobody knew anything. This was so much better than what he at first anticipated, that being, as we know, a man of dull sensibility, he resumed his usual jogtrot life ere long; but no one ever heard him mention the name of his dead child, whilst it was observed that with the snows of winter snow seemed also to descend upon the bereaved old baron's head. Nor was he ever again quite so sturdily upright in his bearing, nor faced he the world so boldly as he had been wont to do. Taking Ailsie's words more deeply to heart than he had ever taken anything in his life before, he resolved that, now he was left to judge and act for himself, he would give his two remaining daughters his full confidence, and strive, however late in the day, to retrieve the errors of their earlier education. 'They were but poor feckless creatures to begin with,' he muttered; 'but perhaps Ailsie was right. *She* would never have tolerated their being anything else.' There was but one 'She' for him thenceforth.

With Lady Carnoustie safely smiling in her bedroom, and with the old nurse's denunciations ringing in his ears, he felt he must do what in him lay for Louisa and Joanna now.

And by-and-by a certain hush crept over the spot where such tragic events had rent the air, and the two quiet sick rooms became centres of home attraction; each a little world in itself.

Penelope began to recover, and Penelope's well-being was the leading thought of the household.

Presently she took note of who spoke to her and ministered to her. She asked what had become of Marie.

Now, Marie had protested weeks before, betwixt hysterics and temper, that she should not stay a day longer than she could help in such a dreadful place, and accordingly she had been gladly despatched on the first opportunity; and it was Katie Cameron—clever, cheery little Katie from Glenmore—who had been sent over by the Misses Soutter to assist Ailsie in her nursing. Penelope had grown quite accustomed to the sight of Katie's face and figure going about, before it ever occurred to her to ask what Katie was doing there.

The next step was a vague interest in her food, and then at last the invalid began to 'take hold.'

'She was just about *dummocked* with it all, and that's the truth,' quoth Dr. McWhinnock, in diagnosing the case. 'But she's pu'd through—she's pu'd through, and she'll be none the worse—not a bawbee the worse—once we get up her strength again. Let her lie still a bit, and don't hurry her. I've no opeenion of hurry. "Hurry no man's cattle," says the proverb, and troth! there's a deal of sense in thae proverbs.'

Accordingly Penelope lay still, and life came back to her.

One day she beckoned the old nurse to her bedside, and pointed to the window-blinds, both of which were drawn down, as they had been for many days. It was a mild November day; a pearly mist hung over the ocean, and not a ripple stirred its glassy surface. The warm season had kept the fuchsias still in luxuriant bloom, while myrtle-blossoms were out upon the south wall of the garden, and verbena branches sprawled all over the path.

'I had no idea autumn was like this in Scotland,' murmured Penelope. 'Myrtle-blossoms in November!' holding up a bunch which Louisa had left with her. 'I think I should like to look out to-day. Draw up the blind and let in the sunlight, Ailsie dear; I know the sun is shining outside.'

But when Ailsie advanced towards the window whence she thought less glare would fall upon the invalid's weakened eye-balls, Penelope's voice grew quite loud and strong in protest.

'Not that blind—not that one.' She waved her hand imperatively. 'I won't look out there—not there. Let me look upon the sea,' pointing to the nearest casement, whence a view of the bay could be obtained from where she lay.

The old woman did as she was bid without a word. After a moment's reflection, she remembered that the other side of the

little turret was that which overlooked the moor,—and then she knew that Penelope's wandering senses were returning.

A little longer and Penelope asked to sit up within the small windowed recess and watch the world below, and thenceforward spent a part of every day there.

On one occasion, and one only, she and Ailsie reverted to the past. Ailsie found her in tears, and gently remonstrated in nursely parlance; but Penelope, looking round carefully to be sure they were alone, bade the old woman sit down beside her for a few minutes.

'You see, Ailsie,' she said, 'I cannot forget that if I had done what I ought, all of this might—I don't say it would—but it *might* have been prevented. If I had refused to keep poor Mina's secret, and insisted on her telling her father or mother——'

'She wadna hae dune it,' said Ailsie sadly. 'No if ye had gaen upo' your knees to her, she was that feared, puir, puir thing! Think ye no if words could hae prevailed, mine wad hae been wantin'?'

'But you said you did not know.'

'Nae mair I did ken to him—to Redwood. Nae mair I did ken—what could be ca'd kennin'. For nae word nor whislt let she fa', and aye turned aside my cautions, an aye laucht at me; but ho! fine I kenne'd for a' that. Maybe, no a' that went on, but eneugh—waes me! eneugh. I wadna tak' ower muckle blame to yersel', my dawtie,' patting the shoulder of her charge tenderly. 'Ye was nae that sair wrang; ye did your best——'

'Perhaps I could not have made her confess, but at least I need not have hurried her into further deceit. I mean,' said Penelope, faltering, 'about Mr. Redwood.'

A quavering shadow of a smile flickered across Ailsie's lips.

'And a' the time Redwood was for yersel'!' she said.

'But I did not know it; I had no idea of it,' eagerly. 'Remember, no one is to be told about that for a long, long time yet, Ailsie; you *will* remember, won't you? It would hurt them dreadfully——'

'I'll no tell. Dinna be feared.'

'Then there was another thing,' proceeded Penelope, blushing a little. 'You know what Tosh said on that day the Ainslies arrived?'

'Aye; I mind.'

'What could he have meant?'

'Miss Penelope, gif ye kenned Tosh as I do, ye wad hae kenned by this, that whiles he means jist naethin' ava! Whiles he's sensible, and he's aye trusty,—but, 'deed, a' the time it's jist Tosh; and though I made as though I believed him thon day, i' my heart I thocht naethin' o't.'

'He must have heard *something*?'

'He micht, or he micht no.'

'I shall learn some day,' said Penelope softly to herself. And meantime she let the subject drop.

She wanted next to know if her father had been told how ill she was.

He had. It had been deemed advisable to inform him after the Edinburgh physician had given his verdict, since no one could foresee what turn the fever might take. Also Dr. McWhinnock was sure that as soon as his patient could move she must be got away from the place. Lord Carnoustie thought that very likely Mr. East would sail for England immediately on receipt of his letter. Lord Carnoustie looked grave as he thus spoke. He did not like the idea of Mr. East's returning to claim his daughter. He did not like at all the idea of being without Penelope.

Every day he now found his way up the turret stair. It was good for the invalid, he averred, to have some one to talk to, and he and she had plenty to talk about. He had always found Penelope took an interest in his affairs, and liked to have full accounts of each day's sport after the shooting began; wherefore it did not in the least surprise him to find that nothing now entertained her so well. He was always saying to Redwood, who had fallen into the way of either joining him on his moor or getting him on to the Inverashet moor, that such and such an exciting bit of luck or evidence of canine intelligence would 'do to tell Penelope.' Redwood, sympathising, would contribute his share towards the items, and occasionally rather more than his share.

He was very cautious,—but he had an easy person to deal with. It was nothing in Lord Carnoustie's eyes for his companion to send a tuft of white heather from the heights to please a poor girl who was confined to her room in the glorious autumn weather.

When he produced a new volume of illustrations, and suggested to Miss Louisa that it might amuse an invalid who was not able to pass the time with reading, no one suspected that he had not got it down from town for his own use. When he brought anything, or when he came over with nothing, or whatever he did, or whatever he left undone, it was all one; Redwood could not go

wrong in the eyes of the hapless Carnoustie family now. They fancied their sorrow shared by him (for it had been no part of Ailsie's business to enlighten anyone on that point), and though we who are behind the scenes know that it was not so to the extent imagined, still it is but just to state that he had a very real respect and regard for the family, and felt more at home and content in their family circle than he did anywhere else, or, truth to tell, than anyone else had ever done before his day.

How much of this may have been due to a dear unacknowledged cause it boots not here to inquire. Penelope, it is true, was in the castle, if unseen; is it unfair to suggest that her presence under its roof cast a dim invisible halo over everything connected with it?

Our readers will have guessed that long before this the former invalid had vanished. Captain Ainslie had indeed taken his departure the very day after the tragedy, his dislocated joint having, it is to be supposed, cured itself miraculously in the night, for it is noteworthy that he walked down to the pier with only the assistance of an arm to lean upon; and that albeit he found the disabled limb a little stiff to work, he experienced no ill effects from using it so suddenly.

'Couldn't stay another day, you know; by Jove I couldn't; neither for their sakes nor for my own,' averred little Bob, emphatically. 'Too awful, you know! Poor things! Fact is, it was a funereal place at the best of times; and, though they were awfully kind to me and all that, I could not have stopped on, to save my life; I really couldn't, you know. Ill or well, I had to make a bolt for it.'

'Ay, if you had had poor little Ainslie nowadays to sing to you, and play your game with, it would have been something,' observed Lord Carnoustie, who naturally saw the matter from the other point of view. 'But he was a well-behaved little creature, and took himself off immediately he felt he was in the way. I shall always think kindly of the creature,' ruminating. 'It was such a comedy of a creature.'

'And how about your other comedy of a creature, uncle Carnoustie? Where has Tosh been all this time? And what has he been about?'

'Tosh? I have not heard or seen anything of him since—stop, "Talk of the devil"—Hoots! the girls mustn't hear me say that! But it's queer, isn't it? There he is; there's Tosh at this very minute,' pointing with his finger, 'coming up the avenue!

There he comes, poor fellow, hirpling along! I must go down and speak to him presently.' Then after a minute, 'What on earth is that hanging down behind his back?' murmured Lord Carnoustie to himself. 'A long black streamer, down to the end of his coat tails. What is that for? And look, Penelope, it is dangling from his Tam-o'-Shanter. He has tied it round his red "Tammy!" What can the idea of that be?'

What indeed? One glance informed the quicker-eyed Penelope; she perceived that Tosh, esteeming himself one of the family, had resolved on sharing their mourning, and in order to do so adequately had wound an enormous crape band round his worsted 'Tammy,' tied a huge bow behind, and let it stream behind him as far as it would go.

'Deed, an' I think it's raal dacent!' exclaimed he proudly, in reply to an ejaculation from Ailsie, who opened her little side door to him; 'it was my mither's, puir weedy' wumman; it was upo' her weedy's bannet, an' I was hainin (saving) it for Carnoustie,—but mebbe it will sair him tae,' he added, taking it off and regarding it fondly. 'Is Carnoustie aboot? He wad be fain to see me wi' sic gran' murrnins.'

Fain, indeed! No sight in the world would have achieved what the poor idiot's inimitable 'murrnins' did for his patron. Lord Carnoustie took one look at Penelope—at Penelope, crimson—then the corners of his mouth slowly relaxed, and the next minute—but we will not pry into the next minute.

'But never let on about this, Penelope—never.' Lord Carnoustie at length wiped his eyes, and got himself out of his chair. 'She would never have forgiven me, poor woman, could she have known I had been laughing. We must get him to take off that thing somehow, and try to forget it—but, oh dear! oh dear!'

At length the day came when Penelope could go downstairs.

Perhaps she could have gone before she did; perhaps she shrank a little from a meeting which must take place, and which she scarcely knew how to face—but, at any rate, she was well; she was fairly strong; and she was just able to seat herself in the corner of poor Lady Carnoustie's own sofa, tenderly offered by the tearful Louisa and Joanna, who felt nothing could be too good, and that dear mamma would herself have wished it could she have been able to understand,—Penelope, we say, had only just got fairly ensconced with all the paraphernalia of invalidism to support her, before the sportsmen were sighted in the avenue.

¹ Widow.

'It will be rather trying seeing Mr. Redwood,' whispered Louisa—Louisa had never been noted for tact—'but we thought you would be glad to get it over. So we told papa to be sure to bring him in to-day.'

Penelope almost wished this had been kept back. Uncertainty would have been something, but now she was shaking and shivering all over; and when Joanna from the window announced, 'Here are papa and Mr. Redwood at the door,' and when Louisa considerably added, 'I know you must be a little nervous, dear Penelope,' and when finally the door opened, and Lord Carnoustie's voice was heard speaking to some one behind, and that 'some one' came in tall and broad behind him, and was felt rather than heard greeting the nearer ladies, and then was coming—coming up to her—poor Penelope felt as if the room were spinning round, and herself the centre of all eyes.

Indeed, she looked so pale, and slight, and trembling, that Redwood scarce knew how to let go the hand he took in his. He had, to be sure, an excuse for a moment's lingering. 'I hope you feel a little better now?' he could be allowed to inquire, and pause for a response.

And then the elder Miss Carnoustie, greatly pluming herself on her discretion, took up the subject and assured him that 'dear Penelope' was very much better, and only looked a little less well to-day than usual because of the excitement of coming downstairs and seeing people. It was always rather an era in an invalid's recovery that first coming downstairs.

Redwood listened with profound attention, glancing every now and then at the little face with its eyes cast down, and wondering how soon he should be able to do more.

But Louisa, for her, was quite on the alert. 'Now we will all go off to the other side of the room, and have our tea there,' she cried; 'and, dear Penelope, you will just stay here, and Mr. Redwood will bring you yours.'

('That's better,' thought he.)

'And put a little table before you, and you can have it comfortably,' subjoined Louisa, departing.

Thus on each of his journeys Redwood had a moment wherein to say or to look something. It was not much; but he was satisfied, as far as it went. Then, at last, he thought he might venture a step further. The Misses Soutter came in, and were cordially welcomed at the tea-table. 'My good angels!' cried Redwood to himself; 'was there ever a call more opportune?'

And without more ado he calmly seated himself on the sofa by Penelope's side.

'I hear your father is expected home,' he said, softly. 'Soon?'

'I am expecting a letter to-day.'

'And you will join him in the south as soon as you are able to travel, Lord Carnoustie tells me.'

'I shall be able as soon as he can have me.'

'You don't look very strong yet—dear,' the last word slipped out under his breath. In a moment the pale cheek beside him was overspread with colour; it seemed such a long, long time since that never-to-be-forgotten night that Redwood—Redwood, whose image had been before Penelope's eyes, whose words and looks and tones had fed every hour of consciousness with throbbing hopes and memories—seemed now, when once more in the flesh by her side, a stranger.

He leaned towards her, and stole the hand which lay temptingly near. 'I am not going to transgress. Don't be afraid,' he murmured. 'It is enough to see you, and be with you again. I—but he had to draw himself upright hastily. Louisa was approaching, letter-bag in hand.

'One for you, Penelope. It looks like your father's hand, but it has no foreign stamp.'

It needed none. Mr. East had arrived in England. The next moment Penelope was exclaiming with a cry, 'Oh, he is come! He is come!' and the next she fell to sobbing like a child.

Redwood rose and withdrew himself.

'Nothing the matter, I hope,' cried the ladies at the far table, in a breath. 'No bad news?'

'Oh no; very good news, I should say. The best thing in the world for her. Mr. East is arrived, and she is a little overcome; but it is only from the momentary surprise.' Then he glanced backwards. 'She is better already. I think,' to Miss Louisa, 'if you were to go and talk to her?'—Louisa delightedly felt that she was quite the person to undertake the delicate task; and when she re-crossed the room she assured them all that dear Penelope was quite recovered, and very happy at the thought of seeing her father again. Mr. East had written desiring her to meet him in London as soon as possible, while knowing nothing of any particular reason for its being desirable she should do so. He had started for home before receiving the last letter from Carnoustie Castle.

'I thought he must have done so,' observed Redwood, curiously well up in the subject. 'He could hardly have had time to reach home from Jamaica, if he had only left it on receipt of your letter on the 16th of last month.'

They then discussed the matter at length.

Presently the Misses Soutter took their leave, and Redwood felt he ought to take his. But he could not go. He had become in a manner one of the Carnoustie family, and for once and away thought he would disobey the dictates of ceremony. 'Miss Carnoustie, are you in a mood to grant a petition?'

Miss Carnoustie was always in the mood—from him.

'I am so very lonely at Inverashet,' pleaded Redwood, 'and it is so very nice here;' looking round, 'may I—won't you ask me to stay on? Please do.'

'Oh, Mr. Redwood, I am so glad!' Lady Carnoustie would have fallen off her chair had she heard the fervent cordial tones, but the Lady Carnoustie of old was now even in Louisa's thoughts only a shadowy 'dear mamma,' whose shadow was invariably benignant. 'I hope you will say whenever you would like to stay on with us,' continued she enthusiastically. 'Papa, will you kindly ring the bell, and send to Inverashet for Mr. Redwood's portmanteau? There is an hour yet before the dressing gong sounds.'

'And we'll go for a turn in the garden, for it's as warm as summer,' appended Carnoustie, doing as he was told. 'It's just wonderfully warm for this time of year.'

'Would not a little air do your niece good?' suggested Redwood, aside to him. 'She looks as if a gentle turn in the air would——'

'Be the very thing for her. Hey, Penelope, put on your hat and shoes, there's a good lassie; and come for a bit of a stroll with Redwood and me. We'll go by the garden door. You needn't take a step more than just the garden round, and I'll give you my arm.'

'And I'll fetch your things, dear.' Both Louisa and Joanna started forward. Everyone was ready to do anything for Penelope now. What had Penelope not done for them?

Louisa put on her cousin's cloak, Joanna fastened her overshoes, Lord Carnoustie himself with anxious awkwardness fumbled with her hat and gloves. Then the latter, as half frightened at his own temerity, and dreading to be prevented carrying it into effect by some unthought-of intervention, seized the little hand

and tucked it under his arm, and, almost ere Penelope knew what she was about, she was borne along into the soft, sweet dusk outside.

But Penelope could not but feel pleased to have come. They wandered about, she and her two stalwart protectors, inhaling the mystic scents of myriad blossoms, and marking the wild straggling growth of the beautiful garden.

‘A garden’s a fine place,’ said Carnoustie meditatively. ‘I’m fond of a garden. If it’s good for nothing else, it’s good to walk in.’ He could not shoot, nor fish, nor farm among his flowery paths, but he could at least take the good of walking, pure and simple, among them. By-and-by it was: ‘Hey, I’d forgotten I wanted to see Finlayson about the seed list. He’s down in the plantation just now. Penelope,’ disengaging her from his arm, ‘just stop here for a minute with Mr. Redwood—give her your arm, Redwood—and I’ll be back in five minutes.’

Redwood respectfully did as he was desired. After a few minutes it was, ‘I may ask a few questions, may I? Only about yourself—only to know how soon you think of going, and how you are to go. You cannot go alone.’

‘Oh no; it is arranged; uncle Carnoustie is to escort me.’

‘Lord Carnoustie? Oh!’ said he, disappointed. ‘I had meant—I had hoped—but perhaps I should not have been permitted?’ looking at her with a wistful interrogating note in his voice.

‘You know,’ Penelope’s reply faltered a little, ‘you know what you promised?’

‘You don’t suppose I would go back from my promise, Penelope?’ He put his hand on hers within his arm.

‘But you know what would be thought?’

‘Oh, I should have taken care! Our meeting should have been purely accidental. Still, perhaps it is best. I am going to be very careful, you need not fear. I have arranged to stay on at Inverashet for the winter shooting,—it is really very good, I am told, only no one has ever had the patience to stay on for it,—and I shall only need to take an occasional run south to see my friends. One must be allowed to see one’s friends occasionally, Penelope?’ and he leaned over to smile into her face.

‘You will be sure not to let them think—I mean they must not be able to—to—’

‘To infer anything? Certainly not. But I really must go to London very soon—within a few days—at least within a few

days of your departure. It may be curious—but I *must* go. I have business, business that cannot be delayed, and that necessitates my calling upon Mr. East—at his office,—you cannot object to that?’

‘Oh, with that,’ said Penelope demurely, ‘I have nothing to do.’ And she could not help smiling back at him for the space of half a second; and a young under-gardener, who was raking near, said to himself, ‘Oho!’

Then Lord Carnoustie came back, and said that he had been detained and was sorry to have been so long, and it was time for Penelope to go in; and as he remorselessly and unconsciously transferred her little hand back from Redwood’s arm to his own, he presented her with a pale November rose he had found blowing on the wall, which she wore to brighten up her black frock in the evening.

In the evening they were all very quiet. Nobody ever did anything particular in the evenings at Carnoustie Castle, and now even the piano was not available. They were sitting here and there aimlessly after dinner, when Lord Carnoustie, after looking once or twice at his young invalid visitor, in whose cheek the pallor of illness was intensified by its contrast with her mourning robe, suddenly made a stupendous proposition.

‘Penelope—ahem!—you’re just sitting there with your hands before you. What was that game you used to play with Captain Ainslie? I dare say Mr. Redwood would play it with you? He used to play it with the Bob creature too.’

Redwood professed his readiness.

‘It’s just nonsense the fuss about cards as cards,’ muttered the old gentleman into Louisa’s ear, Louisa having looked at him for a moment. ‘Even *she* got not to mind the sight of them with Ainslie; and why shouldn’t Redwood do what Ainslie did? Get out the cards,’ decisively.

‘Perhaps if Mr. Redwood would place the screen round that little settee,’ suggested Joanna, as Louisa obeyed the mandate, ‘dear Penelope would not feel a draught; and here is the small table Captain Ainslie found so convenient for picquet.’

And Redwood and Penelope were started at picquet.

It must be owned that the way they played and scored was a novelty in the game. Redwood undertook the scoring. He was very exact and clear-headed at first, but as soon as onlookers had withdrawn, and no one was taking any particular notice of the play or the players, his declarations took something of this form:

'Tierce to the king. *Is any day fixed for you to go?* That's "good," is it? Or have you a higher? *Do you travel by Great Western?* No; stop; excuse me, but you can't count that. No, you don't,' holding back her hand with a smile. 'It is for me to play first. Oh, you have let me take the trick too! You are not attending closely enough to the game, I am afraid. I can't trust you to score with cards, I shall write down our respective numbers with a pencil and paper. You are only thirty-three, and I am a hundred and fifty-three. *What is your address in Portland Place?* Therefore I add your score to my own. And I add also the difference between us. That makes rather a big beating for this round. *And now give me his City address too, if you please.*'

Altogether it was rather a peculiar game of picquet.

The next day Penelope was to have her first drive, and with much state and many wrappings she was installed in the corner seat of the big barouche. How delightfully the soft, mild sea air blew in her face! How it wooed her cheek, and rested on her eyelids! Everything seemed peaceful, tender, caressing.

Louisa now occupied the corner hitherto dedicated to her mother; how soon, how strangely soon, and how easily was poor Lady Carnoustie's place being everywhere filled! The placid invalid kissed her hand from the window as the carriage rolled by, and asked her attendant who the ladies were. She was quite pleased to see the horses' harness flash and glitter in the sun.

'You are enjoying your drive, Penelope, I think,' said Louisa, affectionately. 'What are we stopping for, Duncan?' demanded the speaker, a minute or two later. 'Anything wrong?'

'Mr. Redwood signalled us, my lady.' Duncan pointed to a figure on the foreground of the moor; and in a few minutes Redwood, with his gun on his shoulder and his dogs at his heels, appeared at the carriage door.

'I have been up on the ptarmigan heights,' he said, 'and I remembered that you,' addressing Penelope, 'thought you would like a ptarmigan's wing for your hat. Will you accept one?' producing a brace of the speckled grey birds, whose plumage was just beginning to change for the winter.

He looked so cheerful, so animated, so full of life and vigour altogether, that Penelope, smiling back, wondered a little whether the glad look of his eyes and the ring in his voice would not strike her companion as peculiar in her poor dead sister's supposed admirer.

Louisa, however, perceived nothing. One thought was always as much as she could cope with at a time, and her present thought was that Mr. Redwood had the previous evening appealed to her to rescue him from his loneliness.

'You will come to dine to-night, Mr. Redwood? Pray do. I had intended leaving a message at Inverashet. My father and Penelope are to leave us the day after to-morrow; we find the tide will suit for her to get off from the pier on Thursday, and no other day this week; and, of course, that is a great matter for an invalid, so these will be our last evenings all together.' She almost broke down. 'We shall be so glad if you will come both evenings. It—it will help us to bear them.'

'Of course, you must know I am only too glad to come,' said he.

Penelope durst not meet his eyes as he spoke. He was leaning over the carriage door, too close, too unguarded. He was not even making a pretence of looking beyond herself.

'While dear papa is away we cannot, of course, invite a gentleman,' continued the elderly young lady, with a gentle blush on her maiden cheek, 'but as soon as he returns, which will be in less than a week, you will always be welcome.'

He thanked her courteously. Then he placed Penelope's ptarmigan on her lap.

'Are both of them for me?' said she.

Both? He smiled. Was not all he had to be thenceforth hers?

'So you will come to-night?' concluded Miss Carnoustie, leaning back on her cushions again; 'you know our hour. And, oh, Mr. Redwood, you will not mind, I am sure, but the Misses Soutter are coming. We asked them to dinner,' she concluded, solemnly; 'Penelope wished it.' And to herself she added, 'If dear mamma never did so herself, we feel sure dear mamma had some good reason. But dear mamma would certainly think we ought to do whatever Penelope wishes, now.'

The following day was Penelope's last at Carnoustie Castle.

How terrible and yet how dear had its grey towers become!

But a few short months previously she had stepped on that island shore a free-spirited, whole-hearted girl, eager as a child to grasp the burden of the future, desirous of nothing more than to plunge head foremost into the mystery of life. And now!

Ah, well; no other spot on earth would ever be to her what this place of places had grown to be; no other woods and moorlands would ever have such weird minglings of association, such surpassingly sweet and bitter memories. She would fain have

visited every nook and tenderly inflamed, as youth will, agitation and emotion with the sight; but happily this could not be, and, indeed, all who loved Penelope and valued her peace of mind were now, with the exception of the old lord who was somewhat testy on the subject, intent on hastening her departure, confident that change of scene and companionship alone could effect the full restoration of her powers, and make her all she once had been in health and strength.

Even Redwood was eager that there should be no delay.

On the slightest of pretexts, however, he contrived to keep close and closer to the side of his love as the hour of separation approached; and she could not but be conscious of a watch thus kept, a solicitude thus manifested; albeit to the general view, Mr. Redwood was merely evincing a becoming concern for the welfare of an invalid whom everyone was petting.

Redwood it was who suggested this and that precaution, planned this and that convenience; Redwood who had noted the gradual rise of the barometer, and marked the precise state of the tide. Redwood could give accurate information about the hour when the steamboat might be expected to touch at the quay.

As he made the latter announcement the attention of the party chanced by good hap to be diverted, and Penelope alone caught the quick undertone, 'You won't forbid my being there?'

Of course, she could not 'forbid' his being anywhere.

Indeed her own spirit was beginning to experience a sense of desolation, a yearning for his presence and support, a strange tenderness towards the wild fevered dream—it seemed at times but a dream—whence she had just emerged, but which so soon must begin to fade into the past. Too gladly would she leave it behind; and yet!

But if Redwood—and then it seemed as if Redwood intuitively divined the meaning of her pensive brow. He was fondling on her lap the little curly-haired puppy he had brought as a gift, which was to accompany its new mistress south the next day. 'He will have forgotten all about me before—ahem!—he sees me again. Dogs of this age have such *very* short memories,' looking seriously into Penelope's face. 'You will have an opportunity of seeing for yourself how *extraordinarily* short this little pup's memory is, *very soon*.'

Louisa and Joanna, who were both standing by, heard nothing in the words, but Penelope heard all she wanted.

Again, it was, 'You are going straight on to London without

stopping, Lord Carnoustie? I shall do the same *next week*. I am going up either Monday or Tuesday. Oh yes, I am returning to Inverashet; I shall be here till the end of January at any rate, but I shall have to go up and down to town. That's nothing. One travels so easily nowadays.'

At last he had to take leave. He put off as long as he could, stayed as late as he dared, and almost betrayed himself at the last. But though he had to drive home through the night mists without the lover's 'good-night,' for which his heart hungered, and which by circumstances was denied, he was, in his hidden soul, content.

For Redwood was now fully, deeply, and lastingly in love. He had found in the bright fearless spirit of Penelope the true match for his own soberer self; he had learned to value her innocent gaiety, to care for every note in her voice, every sparkle in her eye; and each moment spent in her society only left him more and more impatient for the time when all barriers between them should be removed.

He desired not only to share every mutual retrospect, but to confide his own individual past,—to smile and sigh over it—to feel what a fool he had been, and to feel afresh what a lucky and a happy fellow he was.

All of this had to be reserved for the hour to which certain murmured syllables pointed, when on the little steamer's deck two figures stood apart from the rest, and two hands lay fast in each other. 'Goodbye,' whispered one voice; 'Till we meet again,' responded the other.

It was not till the early days of spring that news came to the old castle in the north of the approaching marriage of Redwood and Penelope.

Throughout the previous months not a syllable had escaped to betray any understanding which should wound the hearts of its inmates, and by April one and all were prepared not only to hear with equanimity of the engagement, but to applaud it.

'It is what we have been hoping for ever since our dear Mina's death,' exclaimed Louisa and Joanna, going themselves with the news to Glenmore. 'We felt that, as all other hopes had been put an end to, it was by no means unlikely that Mr. Redwood would turn his thoughts towards Penelope. He seemed very much struck with her on her first appearance after her illness. We both observed that he could hardly keep his eyes off her. And

when we heard he had been to visit them in London, and did not think Penelope looked at all strong, and was so much concerned about it, and ran down to see her at Brighton on purpose to set our minds at ease, we could not but fancy he was rather glad of the excuse. From the first he seemed to take to us all. Evidently he wished to enter our family. And now that dear mamma is so much better, we have been able to tell her, and though she does not *quite* understand it, she is just as pleased as if she did. We think, you know, lowering her tone, and looking round, 'that sometimes dear mamma confuses Penelope with— with Mina. When we told her about Penelope going away at first, she talked a great deal about it, and at last we found out what she was thinking; and now she keeps harping on some old days—you know what days, Miss Jean?—and wonders what Lady Ainslie will say. And though it sounds quite coherent and sensible, we know by other things, little things she lets fall, that she is referring to poor Mina and Mr. Etheridge, not to Penelope and Mr. Redwood.'

'I suppose there never was anything between Captain Ainslie and—ahem?' inquired Miss Jean, as carelessly as she could, but she listened with outstretched ears for the reply.

'Never. Oh dear, no!' Louisa laughed at the idea. 'Indeed, Penelope would never have thrown herself away on that little Bob,' subjoined she; and if Bob could have heard her, he would have felt he had sunk low indeed. Even the gentle Louisa was daring to be contemptuous, now that she could dare to be anything. 'But then dear mamma always despised him,' she excused herself, internally.

Little Bob, however, had his good points. He was never known to say a hard word of Penelope East, nor to add her name to those on the roll of his vanquished fair ones. 'She was a very nice girl,' was the only comment he was ever heard to let fall.

Lord Carnoustie had the greatest satisfaction in the match. So had the household generally—in proportion. So had the Misses Soutter—chuckling over John as they announced it.

Whether poor, fond, faithful nurse Ailsie would have been most pleased or saddened could never be known, for she did not live to see the day. Her heart had been broken, and she sank into her quiet grave with the first chill winds of spring.

When they expected the idiot Tosh to participate in the family rejoicings, Tosh, I regret to say, had forgotten who Redwood and Penelope were. He made the announcement, however, a peg on

which to hang his own immediate concerns. 'Troth, an' I hope they'll be *warmer* than I am, then. I'm that cauld this time o' year; an' there's nae Mistress Alison to look after me noo,' shivering and chattering, whereupon of course he received orders to go indoors, which was what he wanted.

But when John Soutter heard of the marriage settlement which had been made upon the bride, he was rueful enough.

'To think,' he cried, 'that all that siller might have gone into the coffers of the Ainslies!'

'It was no fault of mine that it didn't, then,' averred Dr. McWhinnock, considering himself aggrieved by the insinuation. 'I'm sure I kept that loon lying on his back, weeks after he could have been up and stravagin' over the whole country side—and all to please you, John Soutter!'

THE END.

'Roses' from the Gulistan
(the 'Rose Garden')

OF SHAIKH MASLAH-UD-DIN SÂDI AL-SHIRAZI.

BEING EXTRACTS TRANSLATED FROM THE PERSIAN TEXT
BY SIR EDWIN ARNOLD.

THE FIFTH GATEWAY OF THE GULISTAN.

LOVE AND YOUTH.

I.

THEY said to Hasan Maimundi: 'Behold Sultan Mahmud, who possesses so many slaves, endowed with address and beauty; any one among them a marvel of the world and the chosen of our time! How befalleth it that towards none of these doth he show regard and fondness of any such a sort as to Iyaz, who assuredly hath no better gifts of person?'

Hasan made answer:

'Whatsoever finds its way to the heart will beseem itself fairly in the eyes:

He who with favour by Kings is named
For the faults he shows he shall never be shamed;
And he that is thrust from the Princely grace
There is none to praise him in all the place.

Look with eyes of disapproving,
Yusuf's face shall not seem moving!

Look with eyes in loving-wise
And, albeit a fiend appear
With hell's smoke upon him there,
Lo! a shape from Paradise.

II.

They tell of a person of dignity who had a slave exquisite in beauty, towards whom his eyes ever turned with love and affection. Yet he spake sadly one day to one of his friends, saying: 'Ah, the pity! that a favoured slave possessed of such charms and qualities, should wag a tongue so long and so wholly without respectfulness!' Whereat the other answered, 'Ay, Brother! when once you have passed round the cup of friendship hanker not after the wine of service. As soon as the state ariseth of lover and beloved between any twain, the state of master and of dependent hath departed.'

A Lord with one of fairy-face commenced in play and laughter;
What wonder if the Lord grew slave, and slave was Master, after?
Best speeds the servant bearing pots, or piling up the bricks;
When such a one is o'er endeared, like a fed ass he kicks.

III.

I saw one of worth and piety so fallen prisoner to passion for a beautiful person that from the curtain of secrecy his shame peeped forth, and he suffered rebuke and even damage—yet would he not, any the more, abandon his attachment, but spake:

My hand from this beloved skirt I cannot take away;
Though with a sword she smite me sharp, and in her anger slay;
I have no place of sheltering, no refuge half so sweet;
If I should fly 'twould only be to creep back to those feet.

Once I did reproach him, saying: 'What hath befallen, that an ignoble desire should thus gain the mastery over thy erstwhile so excellent judgment?' Whereupon he sank back for a while deep into thought; and presently, recovering, gave reply:

Where'er the Lord of Love doth come no strength in prayer is seen;
Why cry to one neck-deep in mire, 'Ho! keep thy garments clean'?

IV.

There was a man whose heart was gone out of his hand, and who talked of the abandonment of life, by reason that the target of his glances had become an abode of peril, a whirlpool of perdition;

not a sweet mouthful that might safely fall upon the tongue ; not a bird that might lightly come into the net. Now,

When from his fair not gold an answer moves
Alike are gold and dust to one who loves.

His friends, in admonishing him, entreated that he would break away from this foolish fancy, seeing how many by reason of the same inordinate passion were become captive, their feet fast in gyves. But he replied with tears : ' Ah, friends, seek no more to counsel me, for I can only see as the eyes of another will.'

The Lords of war do slay their foes by might of brawn and bone ;
But fair ones kill their lovers by loveliness alone.

It is not conceded in the laws of Love that from apprehension of death any true heart should hold back from attachment to the beloved.

Ye who think of self, in Love,
False to Love shall surely prove ;
If she always doth deny
Then Love bids the lover die.
Onward, desperate, I go
Though I bleed by sword and bow ;
If my hand her sleeve may seize
'Tis enough : should that displease
At the threshold of her grace
I will perish on my face.

His people, who felt some care for his affairs, and had received kindnesses from him, plied him with advice, and even put him in confinement, but it was of no benefit.

In vain physicians mingle bitter drinks
While the sick stomach still of sugar thinks.

And hast thou heard what a beauteous one said, under her breath, to a lover whose heart had gone forth from him ? She said :

As long as nothing rash or mad thou dost for love of me
No lover, Sir ! art thou of mine—and I am naught to thee.

I call to mind how one night the sweetest of my friends came in at my door so suddenly that I, arising with impatient joy,

swept out the light from my lamp with the sleeve of my gown.
It was the verse become true :

' Astonied stood I that my life such lovely luck could hold.'

Sitting down, that heavenly one began laughingly to complain
that at the moment of seeing her I should thus put out the lamp.
' Oh, Light of Life !' said I, '*Aftab dar amad !*'

I thought the sun had risen ; besides, you know the lines—

Ill-looking people you may roughly handle
When they shall come betwixt you and the candle ;
But if it be a smiling, sweet-lipped miss,
Put out the lamp and catch her sleeve, and kiss !

V.

I do call to mind that in my youth I was passing through a street, when mine eyes fell upon one that was moon-faced and most beautiful. It was in the time of the month of Thammuz, the hot season ; so hot that the glare dried up the spittle in a man's mouth, and the fierce wind made the marrow boil in his bones. Yielding to weakness I could no longer support the power of the sun, and from sheer necessity sought shelter under the shadow of a wall, wishing that some one would assuage for me the torment of the time, and even with so much as one drop of water quench my burning thirst. Suddenly—from the darkness of a porch—I observed a splendour, a brilliancy—oh ! such a glory of loveliness as to portray the tongue of eloquence in describing the grace of it would falter paralysed ; like as when forth from the Night glitters the lovely Morning, or as when the Water of Life sparkles out of the Darkness of Death. In her hand she held a cup of snow-sherbet, whereinto she had cast sugar candy, and mixed with it fruit-juices. Was it with rose-water she had perfumed that delicious draught, or did some drops of fragrant compassion fall therein from her cheeks of rose-leaf ? I know not ! To be brief, I seized that heavenly drink from her sweet fingers of symmetry, and drank ; and my weakness passed away.

Happy those eyes which every dawn can see
A face so fair ! Who's drunk with wine may be
Sober by midnight, but, who this way slakes
His thirst, is drunk till judgment-morning breaks.

EDWIN ARNOLD.

An Unresolved Discord.

MY first meeting with that discordant fellow—for discordant he was and remained throughout my acquaintanceship with him, and this, I suppose, accounted for his being at once so attractive and so irritating—took place on a cold, murky November afternoon. I had shut up the organ, after playing a brief voluntary, the choir and the clergy had trooped off, the small congregation was dispersing, and I was about to leave the cathedral, when he strode up to me out of one of the side-aisles and said, 'I believe you are Dr. Duckett?'

'That is my name,' I answered. 'What do you want?'

The truth is that I was not in the best of tempers. Those young rascals of boys had been singing carelessly, as they often do, and if there is one thing I hate more than another it is to be accosted just after a service. People ought to understand that one wants a little time to recover oneself and to forgive the miscreants who will persist in spoiling everything, in spite of all one's efforts to guide them in the way they should go. However, he did not seem to be affronted by my curt manner.

'I want you,' said he, holding out a small roll of manuscript, 'just to glance over this and give me your opinion of it. It's an *Agnus* I have written, and I think myself that it's rather good. In fact, I *know* it's good; though there may be technical errors in it which you will easily detect. I'm only a beginner; but I know enough about music to know that you are as high an authority as there is in England, and that you aren't blinded by prejudice and routine, as most of these stick-in-the-mud cathedral organists are. That's why I thought I would apply to you.'

I looked at this somewhat peremptory and decidedly cool young gentleman. There was not much light left to scrutinise him by; but I could see that he was tall, dark, slender, and handsome. Of course I had no particular reason for obliging him

by correcting his, doubtless faulty, composition; still I am not, I hope, quite as churlish as I am sometimes accused of being, and my heart goes out to a brother musician. One can always recognise them at a glance, I find—that is, the genuine ones, not the correct, respectable, successful rank and file. Perhaps, too, I may have been a trifle flattered by his incidental description of me—who can boast of being superior to the subtle influences of flattery even at the advanced age of forty-eight? Anyhow, I said:

‘Well, you are welcome to my opinion, such as it is. I will find time to examine what you have written to-night, and if you will call at my house between twelve and one o’clock to-morrow, Mr.—’

‘Vincent,’ he interpolated impatiently. ‘Not that it matters.’

‘Mr. Vincent, I will either give you a verbal reply or leave one for you. I dare say you know where I live.’

He said he could easily find out. But perhaps he thought that the simplest way of doing so was to accompany me to my own door in the cloisters; for he walked along beside me and was good enough to tell me, on the way, exactly why it was that the anthem had gone to pieces. I did not mind that; for it was true enough that, as I said before, the boys had not been taking any trouble, and I quite agreed with him that no choir could help being more or less injuriously affected by that drawing, super-annuated Minor Canon; still it did strike me that if this unknown youth was destined to fail as a composer, his failure would hardly be due to any excess of modesty or timidity. He shook hands with me at parting and promised to look in about one o’clock on the next day.

‘I suppose that is your luncheon hour?’ he remarked. ‘Or do you dine in the middle of the day? It’s all the same to me; only I should like to find you at home, because you’re sure to take an interest in me, and the fact is that I rather want you to put me in the way of earning my living here for a time.’

With this truly startling announcement, which he made as calmly as if he had been observing that it was a chilly evening, he marched off, stopping for a moment to light a cigarette.

Mrs. Duckett was quite vexed when I narrated the episode to her, and could not see anything funny in it at all. She said that she had never heard of such impertinence, and added that she presumed it would end, as it always did, in my being robbed of five or ten pounds by an impudent and obvious swindler. I

seldom contradict Mrs. Duckett, but I would beg readers of these lines to believe that I am not quite the fool she takes me for. As organist of Minchester Cathedral, I have a snug little house and a fairly good salary; besides which, I make enough by teaching to pay my way; still, I cannot afford to throw away five or ten pounds either upon swindlers or deserving mendicants, nor am I in the habit of doing any such thing.

As for Mr. Vincent, I looked at his *Agnus* in the course of the evening, and came to the conclusion that it would be a very long time before he made his living by musical composition. It was the work of a downright ignoramus, full of the most egregious mistakes from start to finish; and yet—how shall I explain what I mean to non-musical people?—there were passages in it which more than half tempted me to suspect the fellow of being an un-instructed genius. He had tried to do things—I don't say he had done them—which, to the best of my belief, nobody has ever thought of before, and I suppose, after all, that what artists of any kind love and delight in most is originality.

At all events, he had made no mistake in anticipating with so much confidence that he would interest me, and no sooner had I conducted him to our little dining-room on the morrow than I perceived that he was beginning to interest my wife into the bargain. He was, in fact, when seen in the full light of day, an uncommonly good-looking young man, with large luminous dark-brown eyes, clearly cut features, and a great crop of wavy black hair, which he wore rather too long for my taste, but not too long to suit that of the ladies—who, I have noticed, always admire flowing locks. Moreover, his style of conversation, though a trifle brusque, was of a nature to arouse curiosity. He favoured us with plenty of it, while satisfying the cravings of a healthy appetite; and I am bound to confess that, if he was rather too dictatorial upon the subject of musical matters for so inexperienced a judge, his ideas were not very far wrong. By which, of course, I mean that they coincided with my own. They coincided likewise with those of Mrs. Duckett. At least, I presume that they did; for, as we left the dining-room, she took occasion to whisper in my ear, 'Samuel, that is going to be a great man; you must on no account let him slip through your fingers!'

Now, it is certain that no man can become great as a musical composer until he has mastered the fundamental principles of the art, and this was what I told Mr. Vincent, after I had given him a cigar and had pointed out to him that his *Agnus* in its present

form was altogether inadmissible. He took my censure much more submissively than I had expected—indeed, I have never up to this moment of writing been able to understand how one and the same human being could be so inordinately vain and so unaffectedly humble as he was. He admitted that his knowledge of harmony and counterpoint was as yet superficial; he even went so far as to acknowledge that there were moments when he did not feel quite sure of his power to create.

‘But that,’ he made haste to add, ‘is only when I am down in the mouth, as one is apt to be when one is beset by despicable material worries. I should like to take a few lessons from you, Dr. Duckett; but the nuisance is that I can’t possibly pay you for them. As far as that goes, I can’t very well pay for my daily bread just now, and I was wondering whether you couldn’t help me to get half a dozen singing pupils—so as to keep the wolf from the door, you know.’

It was so likely that, in my responsible position, I should hand over half a dozen of my own pupils to an instructor of whose antecedents and capabilities I knew absolutely nothing!

Well, it was, no doubt, very unlikely that I should behave in that imprudent manner; yet, as a matter of fact, I ended by doing something almost as absurd. I told him that he was welcome, without payment, to such teaching as I could give him. That, I think, was right enough, because members of one calling should always be ready to assist one another. But perhaps I was hardly justified in advancing him a trifle to meet immediate necessities, and I suppose I ought not to have said that I could recommend him to several vocal young ladies of whom I longed to be rid. I ought not to have said so, I mean, in view of his blank refusal to tell me who he was or where he came from. He said I could see for myself that he was a gentleman, and that ought to be enough; he must decline to be cross-examined about his past life. But as to his capabilities, how could I doubt them after hearing him sing? It was merely in order to give me an idea of what he wanted the solo portion of his *Agnus* to sound like that he sat down to the piano and showed me, to my delight and amazement, what he could do. Not only had he a tenor voice of such quality and volume as I had only heard equalled two or three times in my life before, but it was evident that he had been well and carefully taught how to use it. He owned that this was the case in reply to my admiring ejaculations—by which, for the rest, he seemed to set remarkably little store.

'Oh, I have been taught and I can teach,' he said. 'That's nothing; any fool who has a voice can be made to sing, just as any fool who has eyes in his head can be made to read. The select few are those who can produce material for the common herd to work upon.'

He thought that he belonged to that select band: possibly he did. In any event, I found him irresistible, though I have probably failed to convey the least convincing impression of his personal charm. Fortunately for me, my wife was as completely bewitched as I was—if not more so—and during the weeks that followed she could not make too much of the mysterious Mr. Vincent. The mystery with which he was pleased to surround himself was doubtless an additional attraction to her. I believe she took him for a prince in disguise, and built up all manner of romantic histories concerning him upon somewhat slender foundations; but I am not concerned to deny that he was a delightful companion, as well as an apt pupil. Those whom it has been my duty to instruct generally accuse me, I believe, of being rough, rude, and impatient. I cannot call myself a good master, because the slowness with which the average human brain moves exasperates me so. But Vincent almost always saw things at once and never resented the occasional explosions of strong language which I do not trouble myself to restrain when dealing with one of my own sex. He would laugh very good-humouredly at such times, and call himself a duffer. On the other hand, he permitted himself to criticise my methods of interpreting certain composers with a freedom which I really do not think I should have tolerated from anybody else.

What distressed me a good deal was that I felt sure that the man was in absolute want. He would not tell me where he was lodging, but circumstantial evidence convinced me that he had not money enough to pay for the necessities of life; and although it was generally easy to make some excuse for giving him his dinner, I could not very well do more without being asked. As for the few pupils whom I ventured to secure for him, they were daughters of tradespeople from whom no high remuneration was to be expected. However, he was destined ere long to gain a pupil whose wealth, liberality, and social standing left nothing to be desired. The Honourable Netta Thrupp, only child of Lord and Lady De Farnworth, had for some time past condescended to take intermittent singing lessons from me, and honesty compels me to own that I had submitted to the horrible noises with which

she tortured my ears for no better reason than that she was what she was. Lord De Farnworth is such a very great man in our parts—for the matter of that, I suppose he is a very great man everywhere—that it would never have done for me to insult his daughter. Kind Fate ordained that I should be delivered from her without laying myself open to one of those severe lectures from Mrs. Duckett which I dare say I sometimes deserve. *Sic me servavit Apollo.*

I had with some difficulty persuaded Vincent to sing at an afternoon concert which was given, shortly before Christmas, by the Minchester Musical Society; I thought it would be a good advertisement for him, if it did not bring him much in the shape of immediate and tangible reward. At first he would have nothing to do with it, for he never was in the slightest degree vain upon the subject of his wonderful voice, and always spoke with the deepest contempt of ballad-singing; but as I persisted, he ended by shrugging his shoulders impatiently and giving way, the result of which was that he had a magnificent success. I had expected no less; still I was rejoiced to think that I had been the humble means of securing local notoriety for my *protégé*, and I remarked to my wife, after we had returned home and were having a quiet cup of tea together, that a great weight had been taken off my mind.

'You will see,' said I, 'that Vincent will be taken up by all the grandees now. Everybody was there, and everybody was delighted. This afternoon's work ought to be worth a dozen pupils to him, especially as he is so good-looking.'

Amelia said she wished I wouldn't be so worldly and material—as if my lack of worldly wisdom were not the very thing with which she is for ever reproaching me! Mr. Vincent, she declared, was going to be a musical composer of European celebrity; much he would care in a few years' time for Minchester and its poor little grandees!

'That,' I observed, 'may or may not be the case; at present I see no reason whatsoever to suppose that our young friend will ever be a composer at all. But you will admit that the butcher and the baker won't accept the prospect of future celebrity in lieu of immediate cash payments. Therefore I say it is a good thing that the De Farnworths were sitting in the front row, and no bad thing that Vincent has a handsome face as well as a glorious voice.'

Hardly had these words of common sense passed my lips when

there came a rushing sound from the staircase outside ; the door was violently thrown open, and in burst Miss Netta Thrupp, unannounced. She is a most obstreperous young woman ; I am told that it is the fashion to be so, but cannot speak from personal knowledge of the subject. Anyhow, I am sure she must be fashionable, because her father is an ennobled gin distiller of immense wealth, and she has always mixed with the very best society. Just now her little round face was flushed and her little round eyes were gleaming with excitement ; her entire person (which is likewise little and round) quivered with the same emotion.

‘Dr. Duckett,’ said she, ‘I hear you know all about that beautiful and talented young man. Who is he ? Where does he live ? How can one get hold of him ? I warn you that I am going to throw you over and appoint him my singing master in ordinary forthwith. Sorry if you don’t like being superseded ; but what else could you expect ?’

I replied with equal truth and politeness that there are certain honourable employments from which no man who possesses a musical ear and an average amount of self-respect can object to be ousted, and then I told her all that I knew about Vincent—which, to be sure, was not much. I could not even furnish her with his address, and I was just inquiring whether I should send him up to Farnworth to receive instructions, when he himself walked in. She flew at him, jabbering and gesticulating like a little monkey.

‘Dear Mr. Vincent, how delightful of you to appear just when you were wanted ! I was determined not to go home without finding you and telling you that you are simply adorable ! You have taken me nearer to heaven this afternoon than I have ever been before in my life, and if you refuse to give me lessons I shall die, and go somewhere or other—not to heaven, I am afraid. But you *won’t* refuse, will you ? Come back and dine with us—I’ll drive you in my pony-cart—and we’ll make all the arrangements. My people will be charmed to see you, though they don’t know one note from another. But they said you looked awfully distinguished—and so you do, you know.’

I quite thought he would have been disgusted, but he wasn’t ; on the contrary, he appeared to be pleased and flattered. There was no harmonising that fellow. Sometimes I almost shared my wife’s enthusiasm about him ; at other times I felt by no means sure that he was not a very silly and vulgar specimen of humanity.

Perhaps, however, he showed his superiority to the false shame that commonly afflicts silly and vulgar people by replying :

‘I should like nothing better than to dine with you, Miss Thrupp ; but, unfortunately, I haven’t any evening clothes, and unless I can buy a suit at a slop-shop for twenty-seven shillings and sixpence, I must remain without any ; for that sum represents the whole of my available funds.’

‘Evening clothes be bothered !’ returned the vivacious Miss Netta ; ‘angels don’t wear ’em—at least, I never heard that they did. Come as you are, and be worshipped !’

Well, he went ; and no doubt he was worshipped, and no doubt he liked it. One may choose to sneer at the fools whose heads are turned by the adulation of other fools ; but I am afraid it must be admitted that adulation is seldom wholly distasteful to any of us, and I have noticed in the course of my career that great musicians (I don’t know any other great people) are not exempt from that species of weakness. Lord and Lady De Farnworth, whom I called great just now, but with whom I could only boast of a very slight acquaintance, were worthy sort of people, charitable, hospitable—perhaps a little offensive at times, though never intentionally so, I am sure. Very likely they enjoyed patronising this bright, rising star and exhibiting him to the crowd of friends with whom their huge modern mansion was always packed. Even if they had not enjoyed it, they would probably have had to do it ; for they were completely under the thumb of their imperious, plain-featured little daughter.

From that day forth Vincent spent a great deal of his time at Farnworth—rather too much of it, I sometimes thought ; although it was, of course, an advantage to him from one point of view to be thus honoured. What I was afraid of—and certain fatuous speeches of his tended to confirm my fears—was that he would misunderstand a spoilt child’s caprice and would seriously imagine that he had made a conquest of one of the greatest heiresses in England. I felt it my duty to warn him that his fine friends would assuredly forget his existence as soon as they moved up to London ; but he only laughed and replied that they would be very welcome to do so if they could.

‘They and all the rest of the world will be reminded of my existence before long,’ he added, in one of those singular outbursts of conceit and self-confidence of which he had not been cured by encounter with inflexible technical difficulties.

He had learnt a good deal in a wonderfully short space of

time; but I need hardly say that he was still very far from being fit to grapple with the obstacles that bar the path of half-instructed composers. Yet nothing that I could say would keep him from composing. I found out that he was in the habit of sitting up more than half the night through, working at a symphony (nothing less than a symphony, if you please!) which he had in hand, and which he was so good as to promise that I should see when completed. What was the use of telling a lunatic like that that he might as well undertake to build a palace or an ironclad?

One comfort was that he had now a sufficiency of pupils and was able to move into avowable quarters not far from the Precincts. The patronage of the Thrupps had been, as I foresaw that it would be, invaluable to him in a pecuniary sense, and Miss Netta was not the only young lady who decided to desert old Gruff-and-grim (it was, I regret to say, by this disrespectful name that many of them were wont to speak of Samuel Duckett, Mus. Doc., and organist of Minchester Cathedral) in favour of a more amiable, more attractive, and possibly more talented professor. Was it his talent or his amiability and his attractiveness that the Honourable Netta appreciated so highly? My private and regretful conviction was that his talent had very little indeed to do with their intimacy, and I could never get him to express any opinion about her voice or her musical capacity.

'Oh, she pretends to be shy,' he would say in answer to my inquiries; 'she declares that I intimidate her, and our lessons usually resolve themselves into performances on my part. I sit down to the piano and show her how things ought to be done, which seems to satisfy her. Sometimes the fat mamma comes in and joins in the applause. Every now and then I sing flat to see whether that will make any difference, but it never does.'

It was his custom to speak slightly of the De Farnworths, and to laugh at their ostentation, their vulgarity, and their self-importance; but it was easy to see that the incense which they perpetually burnt before him had a sweet savour in his nostrils. Mrs. Duckett, who still clung to her idea that he must be a nobleman in disguise, saw in this tendency an additional proof of his high breeding; but it did not appear to me to indicate that, nor did I quite like the frequent meetings between him and his pupil which took place under my humble roof.

'If this sort of thing is to go on, Amelia,' I said to my wife one evening, 'I believe it will be my duty to say something to

Lord De Farnworth about it. If he chooses to have Vincent up at his place two or three times a week, that is his affair; but when I find the young people encountering each other here day after day, as if by accident, and when I am scowled at unless I at once get up and leave them in sole possession of my drawing-room, I begin to suspect that all is not as it should be. Nothing can come of it, you may say; but I am not so sure of that. Anyhow, I don't wish to be mixed up with a possible scandal.'

'Samuel,' returned Mrs. Duckett in her sternest voice, 'do I ever interfere with you in your management of the choir or your selection of church music, or anything else that you understand? Very well, then; be good enough to give me credit for knowing something about my own business and for being certainly the very last woman to permit anything in the shape of a scandal to take place in *this* house.'

I held my peace—little peace would be mine if I didn't pretty generally hold it!—and went my way; but my opinion remained unaltered. I am, however, free to confess that the *dénouement* which was at hand took me by surprise. I had expected something rather different. Vincent, I should mention, was subject to occasional fits of the deepest despondency and humility—the natural reaction, I suppose, from that buoyant belief in himself and in his glorious future to which I have already alluded. At such times he used to come to me for sympathy and encouragement, and seldom got either; because I thought it was good for him to realise every now and then what a hard, implacable mistress Art is. Well, late one night, after Mrs. Duckett had gone up to bed, he entered my den, where I was smoking just one more pipe, and I perceived at once by the look on his face what he was going to say. He cast himself down in a chair and proceeded to say it all, as he had done more than once before. He was an ass; he was a failure; he was no good and never would be any good; the best thing he could do was to cut his throat, and so forth, and so forth.

'This,' I observed, 'means, no doubt, that the second movement of the famous symphony won't go.'

It meant that, he confessed; but it also meant that he had lost courage, that he had ceased to believe in his powers, that he saw a long vista of meaningless, purposeless years before him—in short, that if he couldn't have what he wanted and become a musical composer of the first order, he would a great deal rather die than live. 'Upon my word and honour,' he concluded, 'I believe this is the truth of it. Exertion of the highest powers

that we possess is so painful to us poor devils of human beings that we can't bring ourselves to face it without being spurred on by sheer terror of famine. One ought to be forced to work for one's bread day by day, like Schubert.'

'Schubert would never have written some of the trivial stuff that he did write if he had been in easier circumstances,' I remarked. 'Still, so far as I can see, you are not likely to be deprived of the wholesome stimulus that you mention yet awhile.'

'Yes, I am,' he returned curtly; 'I am going to marry Netta Thrupp.'

I opened my mouth so wide that my pipe dropped out of it. 'Do you mean to tell me,' I asked, 'that her parents have given their consent to anything so—so amazing?'

'They haven't had time to give or refuse it yet,' he answered coolly; 'she and I only came to an understanding this afternoon. But they won't refuse: she can do anything she likes with them.'

Within limits, that was probably the case; but that they would ever sanction a union between their only child (upon whose beetle brows a ducal coronet might not unreasonably have been expected to descend) and an obscure music master, whose very origin was unknown, was more than I could believe. However, Vincent entertained no misgivings upon the subject.

'It is just possible,' he remarked disdainfully, 'that they may begin by raising objections; but I shall leave Netta to bring them to their bearings. After all, it is an honour that I am doing them. Surely you don't rank Beethoven or Mozart below a successful distiller of spirits!'

I made so bold as to point out that he was not yet Beethoven or Mozart. 'Besides,' I added, 'I thought you were going to be a miserable failure, and that self-destruction was the only course left open to you.'

He burst out laughing. 'Can't you understand that one must have one's ups and downs?' he asked. 'Men of genius are always like that. But then you aren't a man of genius, you dear old literal interpreter of your fellow-creatures and all their works!'

'Perhaps not,' I returned, slightly nettled; 'but I understand something about my craft, at any rate, if I don't understand all the vagaries of people who fancy themselves geniuses; and I would a good deal rather be what I am, let me tell you, than the tame musical pet of a crew of fashionable ladies—which is all that you are ever likely to be.'

I must say for Vincent that he never resented my rudeness. He laughed again, patted me on the shoulder, said I mustn't lose my temper over it, and confessed that he had no business to speak of me otherwise than as his superior. In the end he coaxed me into admitting that I believed in his genius. For the matter of that, I did believe in it, and I do still, though it is out of my power to give convincing reasons for my belief.

It was equally out of my power to discover what his real sentiments were with regard to Miss Thrupp. He asked me whether I did not consider her beautiful, clever, and fascinating, and when I replied that, candidly speaking, I did not, he merely observed that there was room in the world for every variety of taste and proceeded to make irrelevant remarks about the fascinations of Mrs. Duckett, which he chose to assume that I must find irresistible. As for the strenuous opposition on the part of her parents which I foresaw, he utterly declined to believe in it. Netta would very soon make that all right, he declared.

Netta's determination to have her own way did not, however, prevent Lord De Farnworth from bouncing in upon me on the following morning, grunting and gobbling, like an angry little Berkshire pig (which animal, indeed, he closely resembled in features and outline), to ask who the devil Mr. Vincent was, what the devil I meant by allowing my house to be used as a place of assignation, whether I was aware that a word from him would suffice to deprive me of my present post and its emoluments, &c., &c.

I replied that I was unaware of the existence of any such despotic authority as his lordship claimed, while my own domestic despotism was not firmly enough established to admit of my turning out of my house a young lady who saw fit to enter it, uninvited. I added that I could not tell him who the devil Mr. Vincent was, and suggested that he should apply for information to the person chiefly concerned.

'But, confound the fellow! he won't say,' cried the irate little nobleman. 'All I can get out of him is that he is a gentleman and that he is going to be famous some fine day. Famous indeed!—infamous is what I call him! Infamous is the only word to apply to such conduct as his has been, and I defy you to deny it, Dr. Duckett!'

Well, there was not much use in defying me, and so, I suppose, he must have perceived; for, after a time, his wrath died away into almost lachrymose lamentations. Such kindness as he and

Lady De Farnworth had shown to this out-at-elbows 'singing master!—such consideration as they had displayed for him, treating him quite as if he had been one of themselves, putting up with his insolent airs and allowing him to thump the piano for a couple of hours without ceasing after dinner, though the noise had often been most distracting. And now this was their reward! It was enough to make a benevolent man despair of the human race. It was also enough to make an indulgent father repent bitterly of the indulgence which he had lavished upon an undutiful child.

But it was not enough—that very soon became evident—to reduce an undutiful child to a proper state of subjection. When Lord De Farnworth swore that he would never—no, never!—permit his daughter to marry a man who refused to give any account of himself, when he vowed that a well-authenticated statement of her suitor's birth and parentage must and should be a *sine quâ non*, and when he pathetically besought me to say whether I thought it at all possible that Vincent could be some aristocratic personage, masquerading for his own purposes as a pauper musician, I saw that I was in the presence of an already defeated man. He was afraid, no doubt, that the girl would elope, and no doubt she was quite capable of so doing. I could only answer that I was without information, and even without definite opinions, as to the subject of his inquiry. Vincent might be a duke in disguise, or he might be the son of a shopkeeper; but, upon the whole, the latter hypothesis seemed rather more reasonable than the former. And so poor Lord De Farnworth went groaning away.

Being constitutionally unimaginative, I was not half so much disappointed as Mrs. Duckett was when it turned out that the belongings of our mysterious friend were perfectly commonplace and respectable, after all. He was, it appeared, nothing more romantic or more interesting than the orphan nephew of a well-to-do Liverpool merchant, by whom he had been adopted and educated, and with whom he had quarrelled because the Liverpool merchant's soul refused to soar beyond the limits of the counting-house. His real name was Vincent Cunliffe, and his uncle was head of the well-known firm of Cunliffe & Co., who dealt in—I forget what article of commerce. The old gentleman, on being informed that Vincent despised commerce and proposed to go forth into a world which he expected shortly to electrify by the exercise of his musical talents, had told him to go to the deuce, if he liked. He had accordingly betaken himself to Minchester—

though not, it may be hoped, in literal obedience to the above gracious injunction. These particulars we ascertained from Vincent himself, who mentioned that he had had to communicate them to the De Farnworths.

'It would hardly have done for me to be married under a feigned name, you see,' he explained; 'and I had no special motive for concealment. My uncle, of course, is delighted, and has come over to Farnworth, post-haste, to embrace the bride-elect and to say how liberal he is disposed to be in the matter of settlements. They must manage all that amongst themselves; it doesn't in the least interest me, so long as I am allowed to live my own life and so long as it is understood that I will have nothing to do with a mercantile career.'

'And Lord and Lady De Farnworth?' I ventured to inquire. 'Are they as delighted as your uncle?'

He shrugged his shoulders. 'Not quite, I believe,' he answered; 'but they are probably of opinion that things might have been worse, and it has been some consolation to them to hear that my mother was highly connected. One can't expect such people to understand what emperors and kings have always understood, that the only real aristocracy is the aristocracy of talent.'

I had not been previously aware that the royal personages alluded to held that view; but it was, perhaps, just as well that Mr. Vincent Cunliffe did; for, under all the circumstances, arrogance was more likely to serve his turn than humility. Evidently Miss Netta's vast wealth, actual and prospective, was a matter of no moment to him, nor could I divine what his motive was for marrying her. Yet it may be that that motive was not so very far to seek. The girl had fallen over head and ears in love with him—had even, I dare say, gone the length of proposing to him, and his queer, unaccountable vanity had been unable to hold out against the compliment.

His vanity should have been, and very likely was, highly flattered by the attentions which were showered upon him from all quarters when the engagement was publicly announced. I believe I have already mentioned that the ladies of Minchester were inclined to look upon him with a favouring eye: as soon as they heard of his extraordinary good fortune, and as soon as they had become convinced, by consulting books of reference, that his maternal grandfather had really been in the peerage, they hardly knew how to make enough of him. Still they did their best, and such of them as had daughters of their own

tried not to show how vexed they were with themselves for having hitherto failed to divine his social position. As for Miss Netta, she was as proud of her conquest as if the man had actually been what he was so fond of asserting that he was going to be. Few people value themselves upon what has always been theirs, and possibly the pinnacle on which she stood as an heiress of the first water may have seemed to her to be a less exalted one than it did to others. Anyhow, she adored him undisguisedly and a trifle noisily (for it was her nature to make a noise about everything), while he accepted her homage with a goodhumoured toleration which sometimes made me feel that it would do him no great harm to be gently kicked.

This state of things lasted for about ten days, at the expiration of which time my young friend astounded me by walking into my room one evening, and saying curtly, 'Well, it's all off.'

'What is all off?' I asked. 'Surely you don't mean your marriage?'

'That's just what I do mean. There's a fine fuss up at Farnworth, as you may imagine; but really I can't help it. I had to tell Netta last night that the thing was utterly out of the question. My dear sir, did you ever hear her sing?'

'Of course I have heard her sing,' I answered. 'So have you, I presume, as you have been her singing master all this time.'

'No; not more than a few notes. She always put me off, upon one pretext or another, and, indeed, I wasn't very anxious to hear her, suspecting that it would hardly be a treat. But last night, after dinner, she was pleased to favour the company, and—oh, Lord! I must say that I think you might have warned me! How could you ever have supposed that it would be possible for me to live in the house with such a woman? The mercy is that I have found her out in time; for, as I said to her, nothing could have come of our marriage but a speedy and final separation.'

Preposterous though this was, he was perfectly in earnest, and my representations did not avail to shake his resolution for a moment. No doubt, he agreed, an arrangement might have been made by which his wife should bind herself never to sing again; but that would not have satisfied him. The terrible thing was that she should be capable of making those atrocious noises and liking them. It showed such a perverted intelligence, such utter inability to distinguish between right and wrong, that he shuddered still at the thought of what he had escaped.

'Moreover,' he added, with a slight laugh, 'she was much too

furious to come to terms, and so were her people. Lord De Farnworth has expelled me with ignominy from the halls of his posterity, and my uncle swears he will never speak to me again. I stand before you, my dear Dr. Duckett, penniless, but free.'

Must I confess that I inwardly respected this madman, while verbally condemning his conduct in the most forcible language that I could lay my tongue to? It is necessary, perhaps, to be a musician in order to understand exactly how I felt and how thoroughly I could sympathise with the sudden aversion which he had conceived for the Honourable Netta; but anybody can admire disinterestedness, and everybody must acknowledge that Vincent Cunliffe had shown himself superior to those sordid considerations which sway the vast majority of mankind. I did not, however, allow him to suppose that I sympathised with him in the least. On the contrary, I told him that he had behaved not only like a fool but very unlike a gentleman, and that it was his bounden duty to make such reparation as he had it in his power to make without an instant's delay.

He smiled, shook his head, and inquired, pertinently enough, what reparation he had it in his power to make. He was sorry to have put anybody to inconvenience, but he was not going to marry the girl, and, as he was not going to marry her, there was nothing more to be said. The prospect of being cut off by his uncle did not appear to alarm him much. He had made up his mind a long time ago, he said, that he would have to dispense with his uncle's patronage and pecuniary aid. And, indeed, it was only too true that these somewhat necessary benefits were to be denied to him. Walking homewards from the cathedral, after service that afternoon, I was accosted by an angry old gentleman with a red face and a white beard, who introduced himself as Mr. Cunliffe, and stated that he wished to caution me against advancing money to that rascally young nephew of his.

'He is sure to ask you for money,' Mr. Cunliffe said; 'he has no conscience about such matters—or about any other matters either, as far as that goes. Well, you have chosen to take him up, and you can do as you please about helping him. Only be so good as to understand, once for all, that no loan made to him will ever be repaid by me. No man can say that I have not done my duty, and a great deal more than my duty, by that conceited, ungrateful young puppy. Now let him starve, since he prefers to starve! I wash my hands of him—I wash my hands of him, sir!'

Mr. Cunliffe's hands looked as if they would not be the worse

for a little washing; but that is neither here nor there. I thanked him for his friendly warning and wished him good afternoon without waiting to hear the indignant denunciation which I saw that he was anxious to pronounce. What would have been the use of further words? I could not make Vincent marry Miss Thrupp, nor was I by any means sure that, after the insult to which she had been subjected, Miss Thrupp any longer desired to marry Vincent.

The De Farnworths, as was to be expected, left immediately for London; the rupture caused a nine days' wonder in Minchester, and then, if it was not forgotten, it ceased to be so much talked about. Unfortunately, poor Vincent's newly acquired popularity ceased also, and his pupils dropped him as if he had been attacked by leprosy. I dare say the true story of his renunciation did not transpire; I dare say it was generally assumed that something disgraceful had been discovered about him: anyhow, he was sent to Coventry, and Coventry is a dismal place of abode for those whose purses are empty. I don't know how he lived during the two months that followed. I was able to provide him with a little work and a very little pay; but I could no longer offer him dinner, for I am sorry to say that Mrs. Duckett declined to meet him, averring that he had deceived her shamefully, and that she had seen through him all along. The two statements sounded irreconcilable; but I know better than to invite my wife to reconcile her statements.

The poor fellow used to come in late at night, bringing his counterpoint to be corrected, and looking paler and more hollow-cheeked as the weeks passed on. It broke my heart to watch him and to listen to the sanguine anticipations of a bright and glorious future which he had in no way abandoned. Sometimes I quite loved Vincent—he seemed to me to be such a true artist, and his musical instincts were so wonderfully sound; but I must own that at other times he tried my patience almost beyond bearing. His moods were at least as irreconcilable as Mrs. Duckett's assertions, and infinitely more puzzling. He must often, I am sure, have been hungry in those days, and he was occasionally despondent; but, upon the whole, I don't think he was unhappy: there was just that compensating feature in an otherwise melancholy spectacle.

But it fell to my lot to make him unhappy when at length he brought me his famous symphony, and flung the completed score down upon my table, with an exultant air, telling me to

glance over it at my leisure. Alas ! what could I say when he returned on the morrow to hear my verdict ? I did say all that I could ; I was able to affirm honestly that he had made great progress, and that certain passages in his work, if rendered as he had apparently intended that they should be rendered, would have rare beauty ; but to tell him that such a composition could ever be performed by any orchestra would have been not only dishonest, but downright absurd. I could not have believed that any one could have been thrown into such depths of utter despair by adverse criticism as he was, after hearing me out. What on earth had the man expected ? It was beyond me to conjecture ; nor did he think it worth while to reply when I put the question to him. He only said, with tears in his eyes, that he now saw the hopelessness of what he had attempted, and that the attempt would not be repeated for many years, if indeed it were ever repeated at all.

‘Of course it won’t !’ I returned rather impatiently—for his dejection struck me as both unmanly and uncalled for. ‘God bless my soul ! did you think you could sit down and write a symphony as easily as a love-letter ?’

I am afraid he did write a love-letter that very night—whether easily or not I can’t say. I did not see him again for several days, and then he came in to make what he was pleased to call a final confession to me.

‘You have been very kind to me, Dr. Duckett,’ he began, after declining, with a wave of his hand, the cigar that I offered him ; ‘but there is no concealing the fact that you despise me. Well, you can’t possibly despise me more than I do myself—that’s one thing ! To mistake yourself for a lion when you are only a poodle-dog, to imagine that you have the world at your feet, when it is really you who are at the feet of the world, which are not even raised to kick so insignificant an atom out of the way—it would be difficult to be more contemptible, wouldn’t it ? Or do you think that an even lower depth of humiliation might be reached by a man who, having turned his back upon an heiress because she was too unrefined to be tolerated, thought better of it and craved to be taken into her favour again, so that at least her money might save him from the workhouse ?’

‘Have you done that ?’ I asked in some astonishment.

‘If I had,’ he answered, with a dreary laugh, ‘I should have abased myself in vain ; for Netta Thrupp is going to be married shortly to Lord — ; really I forget his title, but no doubt he is

a lord of the best quality that can be bought for money; and she particularly wishes it to be understood that nothing except the tedium of life at Farnworth could ever have made her fancy herself in love with a provincial teacher of music. Well, good-bye, Dr. Duckett, and many thanks for all your goodness to me. You couldn't add to it by lending me a few yards of stout cord, I suppose? No? Never mind; one's razors and the river remain.'

I let him go, scarcely troubling myself to answer these ravings. I was annoyed with him for being so easily discouraged, and still more annoyed with him for having stooped to renew his courtship of Netta Thrupp. As for his threats of suicide, he had indulged in similar ones so frequently that I attached no importance to them, fully expecting to see him back within twenty-four hours in a more cheerful, though perhaps not much more reasonable, frame of mind.

Well, I was wrong; for I never saw him again alive. He was found dead in his bed the next morning, with an empty bottle, which had contained some anæsthetic, beside him, and I shall always feel that I was at least as much to blame for his death as the chemist's assistant who got into such trouble at the inquest, though Mrs. Duckett says that is very great nonsense. What distresses me most, when I think about him, is not the cutting short of a young life—for such calamities are occurring every day, and there is no time to grieve over them—as my strong conviction that a great composer was lost to the world when poor Vincent Cunliffe decided, in his dejection and impatience, upon quitting it. This is the only strong conviction that I can hold concerning him, and this, of course, rests upon no solid basis. The effect produced upon me by his character, with all its jarring and discordant elements, was that harmony must have been meant to be evolved, somehow or other, out of those strange dissonances; but the speculation is an idle one, which probably possesses no interest for anybody save myself. Assuredly it has none for the impulsive young woman who once became enamoured of him, and who is now as happy as possible with her title, her diamonds, and her very indulgent husband. 'Some day,' says Mrs. Duckett, who is nothing if not orthodox, 'all these apparent mysteries will be explained.' Perhaps so.

W. E. NORRIS.

A Street Cry.

FRESH watercresses!
 'Fine fresh watercresses!'
 Rhythmical, sweet,
 In the dust and the heat,
 And the reek that oppresses
 The long stone street,
 Echoes her cry
 As the girl goes by:
 Nearer, you hear her
 Unwearied persistence,
 Till far in the distance
 The notes of it die.

And one, who has lain
 Long vigils keeping,
 Through days that were pleasureless,
 Nights that were measureless
 Mazes of fever
 And mists of the brain,
 Wakes from brief sleeping,
 And smiles as she passes,
 Smiles, and again
 Slumbers, to weave her
 Cry into his dreams:
 And, dreaming, he seems
 In his dear land of Devon,
 Stretched on green grasses
 Beneath its blue heaven
 By well-beloved streams
 Crystalline, pure
 From the Tor and the Moor

A STREET CRY.

With laughter and leap
Across meadow and lea
Rushing down to the sea.
How it lives in his sleep
All the flash and the dance
Where the lithe minnows play

 In shallow and hollow,
And jewelled wings glance

 At the sweep of the swallow,
And long mosses sway
Far down in the cool
Sudden depth of the pool.
And the whitethorn has made
Its own precinct of shade
For the bank's mimic bay
The whitethorn—and in it
Is lilting the linnet
Unstayed, unafraid,
All the midsummer day,
Till sunset's gleam flushes
The points of the rushes.

Sunset! 'tis streaming
Into his chamber
In scarlet and amber;
No dream he is dreaming,
But wakes from his vision
Unfevered, unaching,
(O rapture of waking,
O moment Elysian!)
And, smiling, he blesses
The girl with the cresses.

A. H. BEESLY.

The Roman Journal of Gregorovius.

IN the autumn of 1893 a second edition appeared of the *Römische Tagebücher* of Gregorovius. This journal dates from 1852 to 1874, the most momentous period of his life. He bequeathed it to his friend Professor Althaus, who prefaces it with a biographical sketch. Gregorovius left no directions for the publication of the journal, but the fact that he carefully revised it, while he destroyed his other papers and his friends' correspondence, speaks for itself. The journal reflects the many-sided culture of the writer, the temperament of the poet, combined with the depth and thoroughness of the historian. It records the great events of the day. It gives us glimpses of the remarkable men with whom he came in contact. To those who only care for the objective side of an author, its thoughtful introspection may sometimes appear egotistical. Others, who like to follow the inner workings of the mind in the conception and execution of a great work, will find a special interest in those passages.

The place where Gregorovius was born had an important influence on his intellectual development. His father was Counsellor at Neidenburg, where stood the ruins of a mediæval castle of the Teutonic Knights. He was the means of procuring its restoration, and when it was completed the law offices were transferred thither, and the counsellor with his numerous family took up his abode in it. Such surroundings gave the youngest son, the future historian of Rome, an early interest in the Middle Ages. He used to say that but for his having spent his youth in this castle, the history of Rome might never have been written. Ferdinand Gregorovius first studied theology, but soon found himself unfit for it, and gave himself up to philosophy and history. After teaching some years at the University of Königsberg, where his first books appeared, he felt himself irresistibly drawn to Italy, and in spite of small means he migrated thither in 1852, following in the footsteps of a friend, the young historical painter, Born-

träger. The latter died before the arrival of Gregorovius, and this, and the death of a promising nephew, at first so deeply coloured his thoughts that he failed to find the stimulus which he expected from Italian surroundings. Time, however, softened the blow, and in May, 1853, he says: 'The Roman air has on me the effect of champagne. This sunny atmosphere penetrates me as if from distant happy regions.' He went to Naples, Pompeii, La Cava, Salerno, Pæstum. He found the three temples magnificent and grand, like a trilogy of Æschylus. 'Soon I shall see Syracuse. I rejoice like a child at the prospect of breathing the air of Greece.' On October 3, 1854, we find the momentous passage: 'I intend writing the history of Rome in the Middle Ages. This work requires, it seems to me, the highest calling; yea, an injunction from the Capitoline Jupiter himself. The thought struck me, impressed by the sight of the city from the island bridge of S. Bartolomeo, I must undertake something great which will give substance to my life. I communicated the plan to Dr. Braun, Secretary of the Archæological Institute. He reflected and said, "This is an attempt in which everyone must fail." But nothing daunted, Gregorovius began to collect his materials, while working at the same time at various other things, chiefly poems. April 30, 1856, we read: 'Rome is the demon with which I wrestle. If I am victorious in the struggle, that is, if I succeed in subduing this overwhelming world power by making it a subject of searching inquiry and artistic treatment, I shall be a conqueror indeed.' On September 25, 1856, he writes from Genazzano: 'To-morrow I return to Rome, where I will begin the first volume of the History of the City in the Middle Ages. I shall soon see whether by God's grace I am destined for this work or not.'

The journal suffers a good deal of interruption, as Gregorovius now plunges into his new work, finishing at the same time 'The Tombs of the Popes,' and the poem 'Euphorion,' which both appeared in 1857. In 1858 the first two volumes of the history were completed. He read parts aloud to the Grand Duchess Helena of Russia, who was then staying in Rome. He describes that remarkable Princess as 'a stately, beautiful woman, of rare culture, and with vivid interests for all branches of knowledge.' 'Nothing calls the attention better to defects of form than reading aloud to attentive listeners. The Grand Duchess remarked to me that my style was "tendu." She hit on the right criticism. In the first chapters I am uncertain and therefore laboured. I must

become lighter.' He also read to Ampère, 'one of the most genial of Frenchmen, good-natured, kind, vivacious, and, what is rare among them, without vanity.' He made the acquaintance of Baron von Haxthausen, a Westphalian, the well-known writer on Russia, who had a tendency to spiritualism and was inexhaustible in ghost stories. Gregorovius himself was a great dreamer. In the early part of the journal he tells an experience which might be recorded in the annals of the Psychical Society. When he was a boy at the Gymnasium, before his 'Abiturienten' examination—the equivalent of matriculation—he dreamt that the Professor gave him the 'Ode of Horace,' 'Justum ac tenacem propositi virum,' to explain. 'I studied it well,' he says, 'and when on the day of the examination I entered the hall with my school-fellows, I told them in what way I had learnt what I was going to be examined in. They laughed at me. Professor Petranj took up Horace and said to me: "Open at the Ode, 'Justum ac tenacem propositi virum.'" The others looked at me in astonishment, and I passed brilliantly.'

On April 29, 1859, the *Allgemeine Zeitung* announced the publication of the first volume of the *History of the City of Rome in the Middle Ages*. 'Thus the beginning coincides with what appears to be a complete revolution of Italy.' The events of this momentous year keenly interested Gregorovius: 'I look upon the independence of Italy as a sacred national right,' he says, 'and were every Austrian in Lombardy my own brother, I would urge the Italians to drive him away. But I cannot bear the thought that a man like Napoleon should take the glory of having liberated a people. Germany will renew its youth; Prussia is its Piedmont. The Protestant principle will triumph; but, by the possible destruction of the temporal power of the Pope, Catholicism will concentrate itself energetically, and a struggle of religious principles is at hand.'

In October of the same year Gregorovius spent twelve days at Monte Casino, to which the librarian Kalefati had invited him. There he distinctly heard the cannonading at Gaeta. If the Archives did not contain much that was of use to him, he had 'an invaluable glimpse into the monastic life of the Middle Ages,' and the beauty of the place enchanted him. His room reminded him of his paternal Castle of Neidenburg, and in the companionship of the illustrious Tosti he found the greatest enjoyment. 'In this extraordinary man,' he says, 'there burns a deep and beautiful mind. Everything is intuition with him, he works or

studies little, he draws everything out of himself. He laughs heartily when he speaks; it is the laugh of a happy mind which is never tormented by ambition. Nevertheless, there is in his look something of a superior ability, which suddenly betrays the material for a prince of the Church. He has the inherited spirit of the Benedictine aristocracy. Tosti lives in connection with the minds which have influenced the world from Monte Casino.' When Gregorovius saw to his surprise the portrait of the Police Minister del Caretto in full uniform in the Archive room, it was explained to him how this man, before the Revolution of 1848, had granted the monastery a printing press and had assented to a proposal of Tosti and the Abbot for founding a paper, the *Athenæum of Italy*, in which all Italian *savants*, even those who had been exiled, should write. Rosmini, Silvio Pellico, Manzoni, Cantù, all wished to contribute, and thus the Unification movement began in the monastery. However, an attack upon the Jesuits by Gioberti caused bad blood. Monte Casino was denounced as the centre of unbelief and democracy, the printing press taken away, and several of the monks—among others, Tosti—were banished. The portrait of Caretto remained as the monument of a promising scheme, to which the notorious minister had unconsciously contributed. Since ten years the relations between the monastery and the Government had not been re-established, and Tosti called this *il decennio plumbeo*.

'A philosophic tradition, which dates from the days of Pythagoras, has been kept alive in South Italy, which has produced Thomas Aquinas, Giordano Bruno, Campanelli, Genovesi, and, finally, Galuppi. . . . He has the merit of having revived the philosophic studies.' The day before his departure Gregorovius partook of a solemn historic meal with Tosti, Kalefati, and Wandel, and on October 18 he left Monte Casino. As he descended into the mist of the Campagna, the monastery stood out clear and bright. On arriving at the foggy San Germano, the contrast reminded him of the two parts of Raphael's 'Transfiguration.' The summer of this year, he records, had been one of the pleasantest of his wandering life, and its culminating point Monte Casino.

On December 22 he finished the third volume of the *History*. Not long after this he received, through the influence of Bunsen, a yearly subsidy of 400 thalers for two years towards the writing of the *History*. In 1860 he paid a visit to Königsberg: 'After eight years of pilgrimage and hard struggle, I shall see my native

land again.' He wished to spend his last night in Italy, in the charming island Isola Bella. He was now so fully under the spell of the south, that among the Swiss Alps depression overcame him at having left it, and he longed to return. He stops at Stuttgart, Nuremberg, Leipzig, Danzig, and finally reaches Königsberg. Here much had changed. 'I can go about unknown, as if I wore a mask; and these changes have come about in eight years.' But he also finds friends who had remained stationary at the point where he had left them, while to him the eight years had been 'a great, yea, an immeasurable, epoch.' In his native home, too, all is altered. Of his father's world but a shadow remains. He revisits Gumbinnen, where he was at the Gymnasium from the ages of eleven to seventeen, and where he had not been for twenty-one years. His uncle's house had been rebuilt, the poplars cut down, but the homely avenue of shady beeches welcomes him, and he finds birds' nests in the same trees. 'The experiences of childhood overwhelmed me. Even Pompeii has not moved me as much as this garden where I played my youthful games.'

He visits friends in Poland, and feels renewed sympathy for this unhappy people. 'I wished them resurrection, if ever the dead rise again.' But we are not surprised to hear that he soon longs to get back to his work. By the light of later events it is curious to read the following passage on his return journey: 'I remained but three hours at Strasburg, full of sorrow that this beautiful German town must now remain French for ever.'

On his return in October, 1860, he found the national cause in Italy developing fast. 'It is a wonderful spectacle,' he says, 'to see the new Kingdom of Italy rise up as if by enchantment. When time shall have obliterated all the meaner elements in the struggle, Cavour, Victor Emanuel, and Garibaldi will stand out as heroes of this era. To the student of the struggles of Rome in the past, the sight of the present, which accomplishes a work of which the ages had despaired, is invaluable.' At a later period he writes: 'It was the year 1859 which lifted a veil from my eyes, so that I could recognise more clearly the fundamental ideas of the Middle Ages, and especially the relation of the Papacy to Rome.' The part played by Napoleon was a mystification. 'Not even Tiberius had thus understood the art of acting double. He plays with both parties. He has given up the Marshes and Umbria to Victor Emanuel, and allowed the Papal army to be destroyed at Castel Fidardo, and at the same time he

forces the Pope to acknowledge that he is his only protector; for Goyon has driven the Piedmontese from the Southern Marshes, and invested Terracina, as he had done Viterbo. Napoleon simultaneously promotes and hinders the Italian Revolution.' Gregorovius finds three constantly recurring types in the history of Italy, Macchiavelli, Cæsar Borgia, and the Condottieri.

The 13th of February, 1861, brought the news of the fall of Gaeta. When Pius IX. heard it he said, 'Adesso tocca a noi.' On the 15th, the last King of Naples and his family arrived in Rome, and the historian witnessed with emotion the end of this memorable kingdom, whose foundation by the Normans he had lately been describing. On Palm Sunday he saw them all in St. Peter's, and they appeared to him like a heap of faded leaves scattered by the storm. Francis II. knelt before the Pope to receive the palm. 'A fallen king who takes the palm of resignation from the hands of a tottering Pope is a sight of historic value, and this accompanied by the magnificent strains of the "Stabat Mater."'

History moves so fast that the recollection of these events, so stirring at the time, scarcely moves us now.

Gregorovius cannot accept Rome as the capital of a secular kingdom. It had been too long and too much impregnated with religious and ecclesiastical traditions, and 'a freshly risen kingdom requires for its capital a light material like Berlin, Paris, or Petersburg, upon which it can rapidly impress itself. The King of Italy will only cut a small figure here, like one of the Dacian prisoners on the Arch of Trajan. . . . Rome will lose everything—its republican air, its cosmopolitan breadth, its tragic peace.' His view always was, he writes later on, 'to declare Rome a republic, to leave the Pope, the city, and its district, but to give the Romans the Italian citizenship. Thus Rome would preserve its cosmopolitan character. When that is extinguished there will be a gap in European society.'

On June 6, 1861, Cavour died. 'The master-builder has fallen from his structure; who will continue the work, lead the revolution, keep the parties in check, unravel the machinations of Bonapartism?' His dying as a Catholic, and the sight of his corpse with the crucifix in his hands, made a favourable impression. The Pope said he was not one of the worst enemies of the Church, and he had a mass said for his soul. The end of this year was marked by an eclipse which coincided with a great legitimist demonstration. While the Pope drove to the Church

of Gesù, where thousands had assembled waving white banners, Gregorovius, from Monte Pincio, saw the sun go down ominously in an eclipse near the Vatican.

The fourth volume of the *History* was now in full progress, and in this great work lay the true life of Gregorovius. The summer of 1862 found him at St. Moritz, where he learned the Romance language. He was struck with the large emigration to Australia and California. 'It is strange to think that this heroic nature turns out confectioners.' He proceeded to Munich, met again the Grand Duchess Helena, and learned from her that Garibaldi had been taken prisoner and wounded at Aspromonte. 'He played on those shores the ballad of the "Diver," but the gods forgive reckless folly only once.' Later on he writes: 'Women swarm round the wounded hero like flies about a wound.' Madame Schwabe nursed him. 'He is usually silent, never speaks of politics, and reads Tacitus, as Cola di Rienzi read Livy in prison.' The following words sound almost prophetic: 'Julius von Mohl said the Rhine was an axiom in France. Napoleon will there play his last card. This I fear also. Bad times are before us, but our nationality must rise triumphant out of it all.' After that he saw 'the two cradles of the French Revolution—Ferney and the house of Rousseau at Geneva.'

In the spring of 1863 he witnessed the sudden death in Rome of Munch, the Norwegian historian. 'He could not have died a more beautiful death than here in Rome, at the height of his fame, beloved by his country, which he had only just left.' Norway adopted his children and made them a rich legacy. In the summer Gregorovius saw the excavations of the villa of Livia at Prima Porta, with its beautiful fresco paintings, now believed to be by the contemporary Roman painter Ludius. He worked for some time in the library at Munich and met Giesebrecht, 'Döllinger, a refined, cold, dry man, who expresses himself shrewdly, and recognises the impartiality of the history of Rome.' He next worked in the Archives at Bologna, Sienna, Orvieto, the latter in 'indescribable confusion,' and the 1st November found him back in Rome. In the following winter Ampère died, 'a man of rare culture, encyclopædic knowledge, and incredible vivacity of mind, with a most amiable character, and a benevolence arising from the untainted freshness of his nature, independent in relation to the Napoleonic Government.' The thought that he had died before having finished his history discouraged Gregorovius. Garibaldi was in England at that time, 'led through the drawing-

rooms like a lion held by a string of roses.' The summer found Gregorovius as usual travelling. He visits Assisi. The paintings of Giotto, especially the wedding of St. Francis with Poverty, greatly impress him by their elevated simplicity, so full of deep meaning. He goes to Naples, revisits Pompeii, thinks of his own past, much of which lies buried in ashes. The following winter he finished the fifth volume. In the summer of 1865 Gregorovius was offered a professorship, but he felt that his vocation did not lie there, and preferred his independent studies. Kuno Fischer, who was professor at Jena, and who accompanied the hereditary Grand Duke of Weimar to Rome, in the winter of 1865 described to him the narrow university life of Jena, and congratulated him on his freedom. Two years after he met Auerbach at Stuttgart, who complimented him on his youthful looks, and attributed them to his not having become professor.

A friendship with a noble woman was woven like a golden thread through his life. After a long illness she died on April 3, 1866. 'A good genius has departed from me. She was a true friend to me, great in thought and feeling, free from most of the faults of women, without vanity or egotism, of a rare clear-headedness. She took a part in my spiritual life, and that had compensated her for the loss of her hopes after B—— had forsaken her. She was the most elevated soul I met with in life; even her deceptions had not embittered her, but had made her more noble and entirely unselfish.' In after years he frequently visited her tomb.

Gregorovius's views of the romance of life are condensed in a few words. When the Princess Wittgenstein was writing an article on friendship, he said to her, 'Friendship to be real requires half a life time, love needs but a moment. How precious is friendship, and how divine is love!'

Shortly after the death of 'Pauline' he lost his brother. He thought much of both, but the stirring times raised him above personal sorrow and made it easier to bear.

'Upon such a shrine,
What are our petty griefs, let me not number mine.'

These were the days of Königgratz and Sadowa, of Prussia's triumph and Austria's humiliation. 'It is the spectacle of a torrent of political events breaking out after long stagnation in Germany. The pulse of history beats quicker through telegraphs, railways, inventions, knowledge, and political maturity. What

took Frederick the Great seven years is accomplished by his grandsons in seven days. Besides, what happens now is only what has been long preparing; everything is ripe, hence these mighty electric blows.' The Empress Charlotte visited the Pope in her extreme distress. Her deranged mind looked to him for the protection refused to her by France. She would scarcely leave the Vatican. 'Tutto ci viene a noi,' said the unfortunate Pope; 'ci mancava ancora, che una donna s'impazzisse al Vaticano.'

The Austrians leave Venice—the French leave Rome, a death-blow to the temporal power. 'Mexico, Prussia, Rome, are the lines of retreat of the power of Napoleon, whose star is setting. Great times are coming. They will move round the new German world power and Catholic Reform. At this period, 1864 and 1867, the conversations of Gregorovius with Gervinus show the strong current of feeling against the rising power of Prussia. 'He (Gervinus) is an enemy of all that has been accomplished through Prussia. He prophesies evil, from the unification of Germany through this power. His ideal is the United States; and according to his view Germany should be a federal state.' But his judgment was determined besides by his dislike to the policy of Bismarck. His sense of right was deeply shocked. He believed there was an impassable abyss between South Germany and Prussia. Gregorovius also considered the federal constitution to have an historic basis in Germany, but he takes into account the changes brought about by progress and rapid communication through steam and electricity, and the great agglomerations of population with which statesmen have now to deal, and he has confidence in the growing strength of the national feeling to prevent the schism between North and South Germany which Gervinus feared.

On visiting Stuttgart in the summer of 1867, he was struck by the feeling of unity, combined, however, with a dread of Prussian militarism and absolutism. This fear did not diminish. In the autumn of 1869, he writes from Munich, 'It seems to me as if Berlin Prussianism is loathsome to the south, and will long remain so.' It required the great war of 1871, when the existence of Germany itself was threatened, to weld together the various discordant elements, at first in self-defence, and finally in a victory dearly bought and never to be forgotten.

When the present German Emperor first visited Hanover in 1889, there was among the many inscriptions which were inter-

twined with the green boughs and flowers to welcome him, a very significant one—

‘Wer auf das Ganze den Blick gerichtet
Dem ist schon im Busen der Streit geschlichtet.’

No less eloquent in their silence and solitude were the deserted halls and gardens of the Royal Palace of Herrenhausen. The wheel of necessity mercilessly crushes all that stands in its way.

The criticisms of Gregorovius about some of his fellow historians are at once appreciative and discriminating. He and Gervinus agree in their opinion of Ranke. ‘Ranke only knows diplomacy in history, the people he does not know. He has the most subtle gift of combination and logical acuteness, but he has no power of constructing. His men and things show their inner fibres, but only as in an anatomical theatre. Ranke goes through history as through a picture gallery, writing interesting notes. I compare him as an historian to what Alfieri is as a poet.’ When he made the acquaintance of Ranke some years after, he found him exceedingly interesting, sparkling with witty talk, and even, to his astonishment, an enthusiast.

Of Gervinus he says that, like most learned Germans, he applied the theories of the study to practical life, and judged contemporary events too much by the sayings of a few. He described him as a stately man of remarkable appearance, but with professorial heaviness. Gervinus lived for a time in modest retirement in Rome. He had a passion for Handel’s music, which his wife constantly played to him. A warm friendship grew up between him and Gregorovius. When the latter worked in the Library at Heidelberg in 1867, he spent his leisure hours in Gervinus’s family circle. After the death of Gervinus in 1871, Gregorovius said of him: ‘Gervinus was a noble man in the full sense of the word, with firm convictions, a wide intellectual grasp, a great prosaic cast of mind’—‘prose,’ he says elsewhere, ‘in the noblest and most powerful form.’ ‘He leaves his country an enduring monument of his great intellect and patriotism: the history of national poetry, which he has treated on a philosophical basis.’

In the year 1869 Gregorovius reached the end of his history, but a fit of intense depression came over him, and he delayed the finishing touches. This was the year when the Council met. Döllinger wished Gregorovius to send him reports of its doings in order that he might utilise them, but Gregorovius declined. He

felt that silence alone was becoming to him on account of his scientific and social position in Rome. 'Janus,' with its uncompromising attacks upon the Papacy, was making a great stir, and was put in the Index. Though published anonymously, it was at once recognised to have been inspired if not written by Döllinger. The 'Donauzeitung' challenged Döllinger to admit or contradict the authorship, but he did not reply. The Council inspired Gregorovius with no real interest; even Strossmayer, whom he describes as a man with 'the high forehead of the clear thinker, quiet and firm,' he believed to be at bottom a priest, 'full of vanity and ambition.' He describes the Council scene, where Strossmayer defended the Protestants against some violent attacks, and was hooted down with clenched fists and the cries 'Tu es protestans; tu es hæreticus, descendas:' 'Strossmayer is the hero of the Council, and but for his being able to fall back on Austria, he would now probably share the fate of the two Armenian bishops who are incarcerated in the Palace of the Inquisition.' 'Fanaticism is boundless,' he writes in June, 1870. 'We have lost the feeling of security, and after eighteen years spent in Rome, I feel more of a stranger than the first day. The air has been morally poisoned.'

The Old Catholic movement was, he thought, started on a false basis. 'They represent their condition since the dogma of the Infallibility in such a way as if behind this limit lay a golden age, in front of it nothing but ruin. But this limit is ludicrously fanciful. An Austrian said to me lately: "Before the Infallibility the Catholics believed, by order of the Pope, that two and two make seven; now that he wishes them to believe that twice four make nine, they refuse to do so."' Döllinger was too purely intellectual to inspire enthusiasm. 'Without the fire of faith that flows from the heart it is impossible to imagine a reformer. Döllinger does not possess a single quality for it.'

In July the war broke out and displaced everything else. 'The spirit of 1813 is awake—an enthusiasm as in the days of our fathers.' 'All Germany has risen like one man against France. It was never so strong because it was never so united. There is a feeling of confidence in the issue.' The pages describing day by day the events that some of us have lived through are replete with interest. He cannot work, but 'what is the pen and the word to-day? Action overshadows it. France totters like a bull on whose forehead fell the blow of a giant.' Mindful of his French friends, he feels for the overwhelming misfortunes of

France, and calls Ampère happy that he is dead. His brother served in the campaign and was nearly killed before Amiens. At the sight of all the misery of the French people, he wrote home, 'I should like to be well out of the wretched affairs of this world.' Gregorovius, in those days, sent various articles about the war to the *Allgemeine Zeitung*.

On January 19, 1871, he reached his fiftieth birthday. 'In honour of this event I finished the *History*, leaving only the revision to be done before printing.' Rome had now become the capital of Italy, and on July 2 the King made his entry. 'If we Germans had not shattered the French power,' he writes, 'Victor Emanuel would not this day have entered Rome. The Italian nation which our old Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire governed so long also received its new future at the hands of the new German National Empire.' He compares the situation in Rome to that in Japan, with a worldly and a spiritual power—a Taikoon and a Mikado. Each has its embassies. He did not think the Italians capable of reforming Catholicism. 'They mercilessly criticise themselves, and confess that the moral condition of the people is in contradiction with its political achievements, and it is an undeniable fact that a political revolution remains fruitless without an accompanying moral one.' Faith in a high moral ideal was wanting.

Rome had now lost all charm and interest for him, and he was thinking of leaving it to settle again in Germany. 'The Middle Ages have been swept away as if by a tramontana, with all the historical spirit of the past.' He was glad to have lived so long in the old Rome, as there only he could have written his history. Meanwhile the Italian Professor Ciampi suggested that some acknowledgment should be made to Gregorovius for his *History of the City of Rome*, and this proposal found general support. At first there was some idea of asking the municipality to confer the Roman citizenship on him. Gregorovius does not conceal that he would have considered this as the highest honour that could be bestowed on him, but this plan was dropped, and the municipality decided to publish the Italian translation at their expense. Gregorovius had already conceded the right of publishing the translation to a Venetian publisher, and though he could not cancel this arrangement, it was now settled that the Roman municipality should become responsible for the expense. He ended the year 1872 with the happy consciousness of having finished his life work in a way which Rome considered worthy of itself.

While reading in the Archives for the *History* another work had shaped itself out before him—the *Life of Lucretia Borgia*. ‘I have mastered the material,’ he says, ‘and the writing of it is but play.’ He finished it in December 1873. On March 1, 1874, he learned that the *History* had been put in the Index, and this news greatly exhilarated him. According to custom the decree was placarded on the doors of the three great basilicas, St. Peter, the Lateran, and St. Maria Maggiore. He went to St. Peter, where he saw it. ‘I suddenly felt a personal relation to the venerable dome. I never walked through it in such an exalted frame of mind. I thought of all my labour, my sufferings, my joys, my great passion—all I had thrown into this work, and I praised the good genii who seemed to have watched over it that I was able to accomplish it undisturbed, and at the very moment when the Papal dominion broke down. If the priests had put my history to the interdict after the first volumes had appeared, the work would not exist to-day, for all the libraries of Rome would have been closed to me. Ever since the Jesuits denounced me in the *Civiltà Cattolica* I lived for years in expectation that this thunderbolt would strike me. . . . Only now the dart has been shot—not so much against me as against Prussia, where Bismarck, like a new Diocletian, persecutes Christianity, as the priests cry, and possibly also against the municipality of Rome, at whose expense the publication in Venice is carried out. My work is accomplished and spreads through the world, and the Pope is helping to advertise it. Many people wrote about the decree. Mariano wrote an excellent article in the *Diritto*. All congratulate me on the deserved honour.’

July 14, 1874, was his last day in Rome. He had made up his mind to live with his relations in Germany, he felt his mission was at an end. He had cleared up eleven dark ages of the city. ‘This is my monument here.’ But the thought of breaking with this memorable period of his life filled him with emotion day and night, and often roused him with a start in his sleep. It was a sudden wrench, like that of a tree uprooted by the storm, the vanishing of a whole world, like that of Prospero in the ‘Tempest.’

ELISABETH LECKY.

Across the Years.

HID in some secret chamber of the heart
 Who has not, set apart,
 Old dreams, once sweet, too bitter now for tears,
 Kept from the innocent years
 When this sad world, worn gray by weary feet,
 First met us, strange and sweet ;
 When joys unknown dreamed on the sleeping seas,
 When half-caught mysteries
 Glanced in the woodlands, and the purple hill
 Had glorious secrets still ?
 In that lost world of sweet and fearful joy
 Still dwells and dreams a boy
 Dear to my heart as some wild flower of song
 Heard on a summer night, and lost, alas, so long !

I know there shines a brighter sun for him,
 And out of bluer skies
 Than those which Time and tears make gray and dim
 To disenchanting eyes.
 I fain would see him, yet I fear to meet
 His pure soul's questionings
 Lest I should soil with my world-weary feet
 Young Hope's half-opened wings.
 All the old glamour lies on hill and sea,
 Green woods and valleys lone,
 In that fair world, lost for so long to me,
 Which still is all his own.
 He hears strange voices calling him and sees
 The fairy-people pass
 Where there is naught for me but murmurous bees
 And wind-stirred meadow-grass.

For him there is no dawn that may not bring
Adventure wild and strange;
Not his the curse of vain remembering
Nor the cold fear of change.
I know his thoughts, his hopes, his dreams, for all
Were shared with me of old
Ere I had seen life's pitiless sunlight fall
Across my fairy gold.
And still I know he looks to see me come
Adown the hill of Fame,
As in our dreams with trumpet and with drum
And banners brave we came.
He knows not the black gulfs that open wide
Between my life and his,
That he shall never leave the further side
Nor I return from this.

.

At summer noon he calls me from the heights,
And on long winter nights,
When the brown hills and sky and shining bay
Are all one weary grey,
Above the wild swan's trumpet, ringing clear,
His voice again I hear.
Fain would I rise and go along with him
Out through the shadows dim
To some dark, shining sea where the white stars
Through silvered, cloudy bars
Look on their mirrored beauties and the air
A thousand odours sweet and charmed sounds doth bear.

DUNCAN J. ROBERTSON.

The Unbidden Guest.

BY E. W. HORNING, AUTHOR OF 'TINY LUTTRELL,'
'A BRIDE FROM THE BUSH,' &C.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE WAY OF ALL FLESH.

'**A**Y, it's been a bad job,' said David. 'But it's over and done with now—that's one thing.'

He meant the whole matter, from Mr. Oliver's letter about Miriam to this young lady's ultimate depressing visit; but in his heart he was thinking more of things and a person that came in between; and he glanced in wonder at his wife, who for once had missed an opening to loosen her lips and rail at that person and those things.

They were driving into Melbourne, the old couple together, and such a thing was rare. Moreover, the proposal had been Mrs. Teesdale's, which was rarer still. But rarest of all was her reason, namely, that there were several little odds and ends which she wanted to buy for herself. They had been married thirty-five years, but she had never been known deliberately to buy herself any odds or ends before.

'Fal-lals?' said David chuckling.

'No such thing; you know nothing about it, David.'

'Ribbons?'

'Rubbish,' said Mrs. Teesdale; and David looked at her again, for there was no edge on the word, and, after thirty-five years, there was a something in the woman which was new and puzzling to the man.

What was it? A week and more had passed since Miriam Oliver left them, with undisguised relief in her eyes and the coldest of cold farewells upon her lips, which not even Mrs.

Teesdale, who half attempted it, was allowed to kiss in memory of her parents. Since that day Mrs. T. had not been herself; but David was only now beginning to perceive it. When one has lived thirty-five years with another the master-spirit of the pair, it must be hard indeed for the weaker to discern the first false ring, telling of the first flaw in the stronger vessel. And the weaker vessel need not necessarily be the woman, that is the worst of it; in the Teesdales' case it was certainly plain enough which was which. So the feeble and indolent old man was slow to see infirmity in the active, energetic body, his wife; indeed, the infirmity did not show itself as such quite immediately. It came out first of all in snapping and storming, in continual irritation, culminating in furies as insane as the rage of babes and sucklings. In this stage she would take and tear the unforgotten Missy into little pieces when other irritating matter chanced to flag; and once boxed Arabella's ears for daring to hint that the ways of the genuine Miriam were themselves not absolutely perfect. The name of Missy, whom she could not abuse too roundly, had the excellent effect upon her of taking off the steam; that of Miriam caused certain explosion, because for her Mrs. Teesdale would stick up with her lips while resenting most bitterly in her secret heart every remembered word and look of this young lady. The memory of both girls was gall and wormwood to her. There was only this difference, that she lost her temper in defending Miriam, and found it again in reviling Missy. But now, after not many days, that temper was much less readily lost and found; the sharpness was gone from the tongue to the face; all at once the woman was grown old; and he who had aged before her, though by her side, was the last to realise that she had caught him up.

She could milk no longer. One afternoon she got up from her stool with a very white face and left the shed, walking unsteadily. She never went back to it. She had ceased to be a wonderful woman. It was the very next day that she made David drive her into Melbourne to buy those little odds and ends.

On the way, in the buggy, under a merciless sun, the husband, looking often at his wife, saw at last what manner of changes had taken place. They were outward and visible; they made her look old and ill. It was the worry of recent events, no more, no less. David had been worried himself, he truly said; but there was no sense in anybody's worrying any more about what couldn't be helped, being over and done with, for good and all.

'It's been a bad job,' he said again before they got to

Melbourne; 'a very bad job, as it is. If you let it make you ill, my dear, with thinking about what can't be mended, it'll be a worse job than ever.'

He wanted to accompany Mrs. T. upon her unwonted little flutter among the shops. They had put up the mare at their old servant's inn. The landlord had remarked of his former mistress, and to her face, that she was not looking at all well, but, in fact, very poorly. And as David now thought the same, he was very anxious indeed to go with her and hold the odds while she bought the ends. She would not hear of it; but instead of sharply ordering, she entreated him to mind his own business and stay at the inn; so he stayed there, marvelling, for a time. Then a thought struck him.

He went to the pawnbroker's and saw his watch. It was all right. He had it in his hands, and wound it up, and set it right, and listened to its tick as to the beating of some loving heart, while his own went loud and quick with emotion. Then he left, and wandered along the street with eyes that were absent and distraught until they rested for a moment upon a passing face full of misery. He looked again—it was his wife.

They met with a mutual guilty start—hers the guiltier of the two—so that all the questioning came from him.

'Where have you been, my dear?'

'Collins Street.'

'And what have you bought, and where is it?'

'Nowhere; I've bought nothing at all. I—I couldn't find what I wanted.'

'Not find what you wanted? Not in Melbourne? Nonsense, my dear! You've been to the wrong places; you must take me with you after all. What was it that you wanted most particularly?'

'Nothing, David; I want nothing now. I only want to go home to the farm—only home now, David. There were little things, but—but I couldn't get 'em, and now they don't matter. I am disappointed, but that doesn't matter either. Yes, I *am* disappointed; but now I only want to get home—to get home!'

She was so disappointed, this tough old woman with the weather-beaten face that was now and suddenly so aged and haggard, that her eyes were full of tears even there in the street; and she let them run over when David forged ahead to push the way, and wiped them up before she took his arm again. This

taking of his arm, too, was done more tenderly, more dependently, than ever, perhaps, in their married life before. And David must have felt this himself, for he held up his head and shouldered his way through the crowd like a very brave old gentleman, and drove back to the farm for once the lord and master of his wife—he who had quitted it with less authority than their children.

He was not, of course, exactly aware of it. He was conscious of something, but not so much as all that. He did not know enough to keep him awake that night. But the window-blind took shape out of the darkness, and the wife at David's side saw it with eyes that had never closed. And the grey dawn filled the room; and daylight whitened the face and beard of the sleeping man; and the wife at his side raised herself in the bed and looked long upon David, and wept, and kissed the bedclothes where they covered him, because she was frightened of his waking if she kissed him. But he went on sleeping like a child.

Then Mrs. Teesdale lay back and stared at the ceiling, thinking hard. She thought of their long married life together; and had she been a good wife to David? She thought of the easy-going, sweet-tempered young man who had made laughing love to her long ago in some Yorkshire lane; of the middle-aged philosopher who had found it rather amusing than otherwise to watch worse men making their fortunes while he stood still and chuckled; of the frail, white-haired sleeper who would presently awake with a smile to one day more of indolence and unsuccess. She still envied that sweet temperament, as she had envied it when a girl, though she knew now what no girl could have dreamt, that two such natures linked together would have found themselves hand in hand at the pothouse door in very much shorter time than thirty-five years. He had had no vices, this poor dear David of hers. Neither drink nor cards, nor the racecourse, nor another woman, had ever tempted him from their own hearthstone, which was the place he had loved best through all the years. Through all the years he had never spoken a harsh word to wife or child. He was full of affection and incapable of unkindness, but he was equally incapable of making a strong man's way in the world. Therefore she had played the man's part, which had been thrust upon her; and if this had hardened her could she help it? Was it not natural? Hard labour hardens not the hands alone, but the mind, the eye, the face, the tongue, and the heart most of all. It had hardened her; she realised that now, when the strength

was gone out of her, and she at last knew what it was to feel soft and weak, and to need the support which she had hitherto given.

She tried to be just, however. Perhaps the support had not been all on her side through all the years. Perhaps with his even-minded placidity, his unfailing philosophy, David had all along done very nearly as much for her as she for him. Certainly he had never complained, and the life they had led would have been impossible with a complaining man. In their greatest straits he had stood up to her with a smile and a kiss; he had never depressed her with his own depression. That kiss and smile might have seemed impertinent to her at the time, in the actual circumstances, but now she knew how they had helped her by freeing her mind of special care on his account. So after all he had been a good husband to her; nay, the very best; for what other would have borne with her temper as he had done? What other would have been as calm, and kind, and contented? But he was not fit to be by himself. That was the dreadful part of it. He was not fit to be left alone.

To be sure, there were the children. They were still children to their mother, and young children, too; their minds seemed to have grown no older for so many years. Their mother saw the possibility of their marrying one day—as though that day might not have come any time those ten years and more. She saw it still; and what would become of David then? Arabella would not so much matter; she was just such another as her poor father; but John William——

Here Mrs. Teesdale's thoughts left the main track for a very ugly turning indeed. She had taken this turning once or twice before, but it was so ugly that she had never followed it very far. Now, however, she followed it until not another moment could she lie in bed, but must jump up and speak to her son with the matter hot in her head.

It was quite late enough. She was going out a-milking no more, either morning or evening, and that was another thing which John William must be told. Mrs. Teesdale, like everybody else, was glad to have more things than one to speak about, when the one was so difficult, and even dangerous. She partially dressed, and left the room as quietly as possible. The first grey light was penetrating into the passage as she stole along it. When she reached John William's door, there was a noise within; when she opened it, she stood like a rock on the threshold—because she

had been a plucky woman all her life—and a man was in the act of getting in by the window.

His middle was across the sill, and the crown of his hat was presented to the door.

‘Who are you,’ said Mrs. Teesdale sternly, ‘and what do you want?’

The man raised his head instantly; and it was John William himself.

‘Holloa, mother!’

‘Where have you been?’ said Mrs. Teesdale.

‘I didn’t want to wake you before your time, so I thought I’d come in like this. That’s better!’

He landed lightly on the floor; but his feet jingled; he was spurred as well as booted, and dressed, moreover, in his drab tweed suit.

‘Where have you been?’ said Mrs. Teesdale.

His bed had not been slept in.

‘Been? There was something I had to do. No time during the day. So I’ve just got it done before——’

‘Where have you been?’ said Mrs. Teesdale.

The young man stared. His mother had repeated the question thrice, each time in exactly the same tone, without raising her voice or moving a muscle as she stood on the threshold, with the brass door-handle still between her fingers.

‘What business is it of yours, mother?’ he said sullenly. ‘Surely to goodness I’m old enough to do what I like? I’m not what you’d exactly call a boy.’

‘You are *my* boy. Where have you been?’

‘In Melbourne—since you so very much want to know.’

He had lost patience, and adopted defiance.

‘I was sure of it,’ said Mrs. Teesdale, coming into the room now, and quietly shutting the door behind her. ‘I was sure of it.’

Then, very slowly and deliberately, she raised her left arm, until one lean finger pointed to the wall at his left, and through that wall, as it were, into the room which had been occupied by each of the two visitors. Her eyes flashed into her son’s. The lean finger trembled. But she said no word.

‘What does that mean?’ he asked at last, with an uneasy laugh.

‘You have been—with—that woman!’

‘I wish I had,’ said John William.

‘You have!’ cried his mother.

'I have not. With her? Why, I haven't set eyes on her since the day you took and—the day she left us,' said the angered man, ending quietly.

'Then what have you been doing?'

'I have been looking for her.'

'For that woman?'

'Yes.'

'Looking in Melbourne?'

'Yes.'

'In the streets?—in the streets?'

'Yes.'

'And you have never seen her since——'

'Never.'

'But this isn't the first time! You've been looking night after night! So that's why you ran up them other horses? That's why you're half dead unless you get some sleep of afternoons?'

'Mother,' he said, 'it is.'

'Oh, my God!' cried Mrs. Teesdale, reeling, and breaking down very suddenly. 'Oh, my God!'

In an instant strong arms were round her; but she would not have them; she freed herself and sat down on the chair that was by the bedside, warding him off with one hand while with the other she covered her face. It cut him to the heart to hear her sobs; to note the tears trickling through the old fingers, gnarled and knotted by a long life of hard work; to see the light strong frame, that had seemed all bone and muscle, like a hawk, so shaken. But because of her other hand, which forbade him to touch her, he could only stand aloof with his beard upon his chest and his thick arms folded. At length she calmed herself, and sat looking up at him with both hands in her lap. Her poor feet were bare; he had snatched a pillow from the bed and pushed it under them while she was still beside herself; and now, when she saw what he had done, she looked at him more kindly; and when she spoke, her voice was softer than ever he had heard it, boy or man.

'John William, you must give this up.'

'Mother, we shall break each other's hearts, you and I. I cannot—I cannot!'

'But I know you will. You will give up looking for that girl; you will promise me this before I leave the room. Why should you look for her? How can you expect to find her? You don't

know that she is in Melbourne at all. Why should you think of her——'

'Because I've got to think of her, as long as I've a head on my shoulders and a heart in my body.'

Mrs. Teesdale had her woman's quick instincts, after all. Hence her very singular omission, on this occasion, to apply a single hard name to the enemy whose deadliest thrust of all was only now coming home to her.

'Very well,' she said; 'but you must promise to give up looking for her in Melbourne, by night or by day, at any rate while your mother is alive.'

'It is all that I can do! It is the only chance!' cried the young man, miserably. 'Why should I promise to give up my one chance——'

'Only while I live,' interposed the mother.

'But why should I?'

'Because I shall not live very long. Don't look like that—listen to me. I have been ailing for months; never mind how. Whether it was the worry of lately, or what it was, I don't know; but it's only this last week or two that I've felt too poorly to bide it any longer. I never said a word to anybody—I wouldn't have said a word to you—not this morning, but now I must. And you are not to say a word to anybody—least of all to your father—till I give you leave. But the night before last I felt like dying where I sat milking; so I made your father take me into Melbourne, to buy some odds and ends. So I told him, poor man. But a doctor's opinion was all I wanted; that was my odds and ends. And I got it! No, let me tell you first; I went to Dr. James Murray, in Collins Street East. I had heard of him. So I went to him for the worst; but I never thought it would be the very worst; and it was—it was!'

There was an interruption here.

'My boy! Nay, you mustn't fret; I'm sixty-three come August, and it's not a bad age isn't that. I may see August, he says. He says I may live a good few months yet. Nay, never mind what it is that's the matter with me; you'll know soon enough. He says he'll come and see me for nothing. It's an interesting case, he says; wanted me to go into a hospital and be under his eye, he did. But that I wouldn't, so he thinks he must come and see me. Nay, never mind—never mind! Only promise not to look for that girl—any more—till I am gone.'

The promise was given. John William had long been kneel-

ing at his mother's feet, and kissing her hands, her face, her neck, her eyes. That was the interruption which had taken place. Now he was crying like a child.

Mr. Teesdale awoke as his wife reopened their bedroom door.

'My dear,' said he, sweetly, 'you've been going about with bare feet! You'll be catching your death of cold!'

He was not to be told just yet; and because Mrs. Teesdale's eyes were full of tears, which he must not see, she made answer in her very sharpest manner.

'Mind your own business, and go to sleep again, do!'

David only smiled.

'All right, my dear, you know best. But if you *did* catch your death o' cold, it'd be a bad job for the lot of us; it'd be the worst job of all, would that!'

CHAPTER XIX.

TO THE TUNE OF RAIN.

TOWARDS the close of a depressing afternoon in the following winter Arabella might have been seen (but barely heard) to steal out of the farmhouse by the front door, which she shut very softly behind her. Twilight had set in before its time, thanks to the ponderous clouds that were gathered and still gathering overhead; but as she came forth into the open air, Arabella blinked, like one accustomed to no light at all. Rain had fallen freely during the day, but only, it seemed certain, as a foretaste of what was presently to come. At the moment all was very still, which rendered it the more difficult to make no noise; but this time Arabella was not bound upon any secret or private enterprise. She stepped out naturally enough when a few yards from the house, her simple object being a breath of fresh air; and from her white face and tired eyes, of this she was in urgent need. She picked her way as quickly as possible across the muddy yard, but ere she reached the gate was accosted by old Willie, who was off duty until milk-cart time in the small hours, and who peered at her with a grave, inquiring look before opening his mouth.

'About the same, miss?'

She shook her head.

'No better, at any rate; if anything, worse.'

'And Mr. Teesdale?'

'He is keeping up. The woman who is helping me to nurse has a baby. She had to bring it with her. Father plays with it all day, and it seems to occupy his mind.'

'Well, that's something. Now get your snack of air, miss. I mustn't keep you.'

'No, you mustn't. I am going to the Cultivation, it is so high and open there. Do you think it will rain before I can get back?'

Old Willie looked aloft. He was an ancient mariner, who had deserted his ship for the diggings in the early days; hence the aptitude for regular night-work.

'I think we shall catch it before pitch-dark,' said he; 'so you'd better look sharp, miss; and—good night!'

'Good night; and thank you—thank you.'

But Arabella walked away wincing, and she opened the gate with her left hand; for the horny-fisted old sea-dog had shown his sympathy by nearly breaking her right.

It was the gate that led one among the gum-trees, down into that shallow gully, and so upward to the Cultivation. The trees were as leafy as ever in summer-time; the grass at their feet was much greener. There was no other striking difference to mark the exchange of seasons, saving always the heavy grey sky and the damp raw air. Arabella drew her shawl skin-tight about her shoulders, and walked rapidly; but far swifter than her feet went her thoughts—to last summer.

Heaven knows there were others to think of first—and last—just then. Yet in a minute or two Arabella was thinking only of the wicked, the dishonest, the immoral Missy. Nothing was known of her at the farm from the day she left it. That was nearly eight months ago, and eight months was time enough, surely, to forget her in; but here, of all places, Arabella could never forget the woman who had saved her own woman's honour. Here it had happened. It was at the Cultivation corner that she had made the tryst that would infallibly have been her ruin; it was somewhere hereabouts that Missy had kept that tryst for her and saved her from ruin. She could never come this way without thinking only of Missy, and wondering whether she was alive, and where she was, and what doing. Therefore that which happened this evening was in reality less of a coincidence than it looked.

The girl of whom she was thinking stood suddenly in Arabella's path.

The recognition, however, was not so immediate. Missy was clad in garments that were the meanest rags compared even with those in which she had first appeared at the farm; also, she was thin to emaciation, and not a strand of her distinguishing red hair could be seen for the unsightly bonnet which was tightly fastened over her head and ears. Consider, further, the light, and you will have more patience than Missy had with the dumbfounded Arabella.

'Don't you know me, 'Bella, or *won't* you know me?'

Arabella did know her then, and her hands flew out to the other's and caught them tight. Then she doubted her knowledge—the hands were harder than her own.

'Missy! No, I don't believe it is you. Where's your fringe? Why are you—like this? How can it be you? You never used to have hard hands!'

Yet she held them tight.

'Don't talk so loud,' said Missy, nervously; 'there might be some one about. You know it's me. I wonder how you can bear to touch me!'

'I can bear a bit more than that,' said Arabella warmly, and she flung her arms about the other, and reached up and kissed her lovingly upon the mouth, upon both cheeks. The cheeks were cold, and the back and shoulders were wet to the hands and wrists encircling them.

'You're a good sort, 'Bella,' murmured Missy, not particularly touched, but in a grateful tone enough. 'You always were. There, that'll do. Fancy you not even being choked off yet—and me like this!'

'Fancy you being back again, Missy! That's the grand thing. I can hardly credit it even now. But you're terribly wet, poor dear! It's dreadful for you, Missy, it is indeed!'

'Oh, that's nothing; it did rain pretty hard, but there'll be some more in a minute, so it would come to the same thing in any case.'

'Then you have walked, and were caught in it on the road?'

'Do I look as if I'd ridden? Yes, and it was a pretty long road——'

'From Melbourne?—I should think it was.'

Missy laughed.

'From Melbourne, that's no distance. I've travelled more than twice as far since morning, my dear, and I shall have it to travel all over again before to-morrow morning.'

'Then you haven't come from Melbourne?' cried Arabella, highly amazed.

'Haven't set foot in it since I saw you last.'

'Where in the world have you been, then, Missy?'

But even as they were speaking, the grass whispered on every hand, the leaves rustled, and down came the rain in torrents. Arabella found herself taken by the arm and led into the shelter of the nearest tree—a spreading she-oak. She was much agitated.

'Oh, what am I to do?' she cried. 'I dare not stay many minutes; but I would give anything to stay ever so long, Missy! You don't understand. Tell me quickly where you have been, if you never went back to Melbourne?'

'Nay, if you're in a hurry, it's you that must tell me things. That's what I've come all this way for, 'Bella—just to hear how you're all getting on. How's Mr. Teesdale?'

'He's as well as he ever is.'

'And you, 'Bella?'

'Oh, there's never anything the matter with me.'

'And John William?'

'There's not much the matter with him, either.'

'Then that's all right.' Missy fetched a sigh of relief.

It struck Arabella as very odd indeed that the only one of them after whom Missy did not ask should be Mrs. Teesdale. But was it odd? Quite apart from any rights or wrongs, Mrs. Teesdale had been Missy's natural enemy from the first. Moreover, she had struck Missy as an old woman who would never grow older or die; and Arabella let it pass. She was in a hurry, and it was now her turn to get answers from Missy.

'Where have you been,' she repeated, 'if you never went back to Melbourne? Be quick and tell me all about it.'

Missy shook her head, shaking the rain that had gathered upon her shabby bonnet into Arabella's eyes. It was raining very heavily all this time, and the she-oak's shelter left much to be desired. But Missy was now the one with her arms about the other, who was, as we know, a much shorter woman; so that Arabella, whose back was to the tree-trunk, was being kept wonderfully dry. Missy shook her head.

'I can't tell you much if I'm to tell you quickly. You are in a hurry, I can see, and indeed it's no wonder——'

'Oh, you don't understand, Missy!' cried the other in a torment. 'If only you would come into the house——'

'That I never can.'

'I tell you that you don't understand. You could—just now.'

'Never,' said Missy firmly. 'I know my sins pretty well by this time. I've had time to study 'em lately; and the worst of the lot was how I played it upon all of you here. Now don't *you* begin! You want to know where I've been lying low all this while, and what I've been doing. I'll tell you in two twos; then I'll give you what I've got for Mr. Teesdale, and then you shall run away indoors, and back I go to the place I come from. Where's that? Over twenty miles away, in the Dandenong Ranges. It's a farm like this—What am I saying? There never was or will be a farm like this! But it isn't so unlike, either, in this and that; and I'm the girl in the kitchen there, same as Mary Jane is here, and help milk the cows, and cook the dinner, and clean up the place, and all that.'

'Oh, Missy, I can scarcely believe it! Yet I felt hard work on your hands the moment I touched them—they are as rough and hard as Mary Jane's,' said Arabella, taking fresh hold of them, 'and your dress is just like hers. Where did you get such a dress? And how did you come to get taken on at the farm? We all thought you'd gone straight back to Melbourne; as for John William—'

She hesitated. It was one thing to befriend Missy; but Arabella could not help taking a special and a different view of her in relation to her own brother.

'Yes?' said Missy.

'John William was quite sure of it.'

'Then—I suppose—he never thought of looking for me? No, of course he wouldn't. Why should he?'

'You—you could hardly expect it, dear, I think,' said John William's sister, very gently.

'Hardly; what a cracked thing it was to say!' cried Missy, laughing down the wistful tone into which she had dropped. 'But you none of you could have guessed much about my life there, if you thought I was likely to go straight back to Melbourne from here. No, and you can't have known what it was to me to have lived here for two months, even as a cheat and a liar. There's worse things than cheating and lying, 'Bella; there's things that cheating and lying's a healthy change after! But never mind all that. When I left you, and had got through the township, I didn't take the road to Melbourne at all; I took the other road. Bang ahead of me was them Dandenong Ranges that

your dear old father's always looking at as he sits at the table. I wonder does he look at 'em as much as ever? So I said, "Them ranges is the place for me;" and I stumped for them ranges straight away. I swopped dresses with a woman I met on the road; this is the rags of what I got for mine; and then I stopped at all the farms asking for work. How I got work, after ever so long, and all about it, I'd tell you if you weren't in such a hurry to go. You'll get wet, you know, and here you're as dry as a bone. But I suppose it's only natural!

'It isn't natural, Missy, and it isn't true,' said Arabella, earnestly. 'Oh, if only you understood everything! As if I could ever forget what you did for me—in this very paddock!'

'It was under this very tree, for that matter,' said Missy, with a laugh. 'I found it easily enough, and I was standing under it for old acquaintance when you came along. Do you know what he got?'

Arabella hung her head, because in the *Argus* she had read his sentence, to whom once she had been prepared to commit body and soul. She did not answer; but in her anxiety to be good to Missy, she forgot that other anxiety concerning her brother.

'If only you would come into the house, and let me give you some dry things and some supper! You must need both; and you have no idea how clear the coast is. You don't understand!

'What is it that I don't understand?' asked Missy, pertinently. 'You keep on saying that.'

'It is my mother—you never asked after her. She is very ill. She is—on her deathbed.'

For more than a minute Missy remained speechless, while the fall of the rain on leaf and blade seemed all at once to have grown very loud. Then she shook her head firmly.

'I am so sorry for you all; but it's all the more reason why I mustn't come in. If she were well, I daren't.'

They argued the matter. The want of food was admitted; that of dry clothes, obvious.

'If you would only come as far as the cart-shed; there's not the least chance of anyone going there till Old Willie does at two o'clock in the morning; and there I could bring you some supper and a change as well. If you would only do that,' Arabella urged, 'it would be something.'

'You would promise not to tell a soul?'

'I do promise.'

'Not even John William?'

Arabella remembered her forgotten anxiety. 'Certainly not John William,' said she, emphatically. And Missy gave in at last.

Five minutes later they stood, wet and dripping, in the cart-shed. It was one of the many more or less ramshackle shanties which stood around the homestead yard. It had a galvanised iron roof, a back and two sides of wattle and dab, and no front at all. And no sooner had the two women gained this shelter than a man's voice calling through the rain caused them to cling instinctively together. The man was John William, and, low as his voice was purposely pitched, the words carried clear and clean into the cart-shed.

'Bella! 'Bella! Where are you, 'Bella?'

And the voice was coming nearer.

'I must go,' whispered 'Bella.

'Remember your promise!'

Missy could not know how superfluous was her caution; it comforted her to remember that she had given it, now that she was left alone, able to think, and to examine the situation. This was not that situation which she had planned and bargained for in her own mind; this was the better of the two. She had intended to waylay Arabella, but she had never hoped to manage it so far from the house. She had contemplated the impossibility of waylaying her at all—the necessity of knocking at her window as she was going to bed—the circumstances of a more difficult and a more dangerous interview than that which had already taken place. She knew the daily ways of the farm well enough to know also that she was tolerably safe at present where she was. Soon Arabella would return with eatables and dry clothing, and the one would be as welcome as the other. Meantime, Missy had hidden herself under the spring-cart, lest by any chance another should look into the shed before Arabella. When the latter came back, she would confide into her safe keeping that which she had brought for Mr. Teesdale, to be given him not before Missy had been twenty-four hours gone from the premises. And after that——

Nothing mattered after that.

But Arabella did not return so very soon, after all; and it was uncomfortable for body and nerves alike, crouching under the spring-cart; and the rain made such an uproar on the iron roof

that it would be impossible to hear footsteps outside, came they never so near; and this made it worse still for the nerves.

The cowshed was not far from that which sheltered buggy and carts and Missy in the midst of them. On a perfectly still evening it would have been possible to hear the jet of milk playing on the side of the pail; but to-night Missy could hear nothing but the rain and her own heart beating. It was raining harder than ever. She crouched, watching the sputtering blackness outside until, very suddenly, it ceased to be absolutely black. The light of a lantern came swinging nearer and nearer to the shed.

'What can she want with a lantern?' thought Missy, shrinking for a moment as the rays reached her. Then she extricated herself from the spring-cart wheels, stood upright, and asked the question aloud when the lantern itself was within a yard or two of the shelter. Now you cannot tell who is carrying the ordinary lantern when the night is dark and there is no other light at all; and Missy never dreamt that this was any person but Arabella, until strong arms encircled her and the breath was out of her body.

At last she gasped—

'Arabella told you! She has broken her sacred promise!'

'No one told me; but I saw it in Arabella's face. . . . Missy! Missy! To think that I have got you safe! I shall never let you go any more—never—never!'

Suddenly he swept her off her feet and bore her into the rain.

'Where are you going to take me? Not into the house?'

She could scarcely speak; she was quite past struggling. Without answering, he bore her on.

CHAPTER XX.

THE LAST ENCOUNTER.

It was in the old parlour, an hour later.

Here the change from summer to winter struck the eye more forcibly than it ever can out of doors in a country where no leaves fall. The gauze screen which had fitted in front of the fireplace was put away, and a log fire burnt excellently on the whitened hearth; the room was further lighted by the kerosene lamp that

stood as of old upon the table; the gun-room door was shut; and a pair of old green curtains, of a different shade from that of the tablecloth, which looked less green and more faded than ever, were drawn across the window.

Mr. Teesdale sat in his accustomed corner, with his chair pushed back and pointing neither towards the table nor the fire, but between the two. On his knee was a barelegged child, perhaps fourteen months old. Arabella, when she was in the room, took a chair near the table, if she sat down at all, and the lamplight only blackened the inscription of sleepless nights and anxious days that was cut deep upon her pallid face. John William sat at that end of the sofa which he had invariably affected, watching Missy; they all did this, even to Mr. Teesdale, who was also occupied with the child upon his knee; but all save the child, who sometimes crowed and was checked, sat more like waxworks in a show than living, suffering beings.

When one spoke, it was in a whisper. But there was very little speaking. If Missy had not come back at all they could scarcely have been more silent.

Yet the way they spoke to her when they spoke at all—the way they looked at her, whether they spoke or not—this was much more remarkable than their silence, for which there was good reason. They spoke to Missy as to an old and valued friend, who had come at a cruel time, but who brought her own welcome even so; they looked at her with hospitable, grieved eyes that entreated her to take the kindly will for the kindlier deed. Across their faces, too, there now and then swept looks of apprehension which she did not see; but never a shade that would have led a stranger to suspect that they knew aught but good of this girl, or that she had rendered aught but kindness to them and theirs.

As for Missy, she did not see half their looks, because her own eyes had been either averted or downcast during the whole of the hour that she had already spent in the room. Now they were averted. She was sitting on a stool by the fireside—by that side of the fire which was furthest from Mr. Teesdale and nearest to the door. Her body was bent forward; her eyes were fixed pensively upon the fire; her left elbow rested upon her knee, and her chin in the hollow of her left hand. Hand and face were brown alike from hard work in all weathers. It was the weather of that day, however, that had quenched the colour from her hair; limp and soaking as it was, it looked much less red than formerly in the

glare of midsummer. Also the fringe had disappeared entirely; but this alteration was permanent. Most notable of all changes, however, was the gauntness and angularity of the old good figure, which had struck Arabella even in the darkness; it was painfully conspicuous in the light. Missy had been to her box with Arabella, and was clad in a blouse and skirt that had been made for her ten months earlier. They fitted but loosely now. A hat and jacket, which she had also obtained from her box, had been taken away from her by John William: it lay within reach of his hand upon the sofa, where he appeared content to sit still and stare fixedly at Missy's back. Thus he was not aware that she had taken a small roll of papers out of her blouse, and that her right hand had been for some time fidgeting with it in her lap. And when David, who had a much better view, broke the silence with a low-toned question, the younger Teesdale had to get up in order to understand what his father meant.

'What is it you have got there, Missy?'

'It is something that I—I wanted to talk to you about, Mr. Teesdale.' She turned her head and looked a little wistfully at John William and Arabella; but neither of these two perceived that she wished to speak to Mr. Teesdale alone; and, after all, there was no reason why she should not speak out in front of them. So she proceeded. 'It's something rather important—it's the only thing that could ever have brought me back here. Mr. Teesdale, you never took possession of my box after all!'

'Twasn't likely,' said David.

'But I meant you to. I told Arabella——'

'Yes, yes, but you didn't really and truly expect me to take you at your word, Missy?'

'Of course I did. The box was yours. It and all that was in it had been bought with your money.'

'I wouldn't have anybody touch the box,' said David, with characteristic pride. 'I took and locked it up myself, and I've kept the key in my pocket ever since.'

'But it was all yours by rights——'

'I care nothing at all about that!'

'The dresses and things, as well as the box itself, were worth something. Not much, perhaps—still, something. And then there were four pounds and some silver which I'd never touched. Here they are—four pounds.'

She got up and laid them in a row on the tablecloth under

the lamp. The others had risen also; and John William, for one, had his eyes fixed upon the little roll of paper in her right hand. It was a roll of one-pound notes. She began to lay them one by one upon the table, counting aloud as she did so.

‘One, two, three, four, five, six——’

‘Stop a moment,’ said David, trembling. ‘How did you come by them, Missy?’

‘Seven, eight. Didn’t I tell you that I’ve been working all this time upon a farm? Nine——’

‘Ah, yes, you did.’

There had been a few explanations—a very few—when John William had first brought her in. Then dry clothes, then supper, then silence. It must be remembered that the shadow of death hung over the farm.

‘Ten. I was there thirty-three weeks last Saturday. Eleven. They gave me ten shillings a week, and they found me—twelve—in food and clothes. I had things to put up with—thirteen—but nothing I couldn’t bear. I was thankful you’d taught me to milk here. Fourteen, fifteen. I was so! Sixteen, and that’s the lot. Sixteen and four’s twenty. Twenty pound I got out of you, Mr. Teesdale, because I couldn’t resist it when you said what you may recollect saying as you drove me back into Melbourne that first day. I never meant to pay you back; I wasn’t half sure that I’d ever let you see me again. I don’t say I should have done it if I’d known you’d go and pawn your watch for me; still I did do you out of the twenty pounds, and I meant to do you out of them for good and all. But here they are.’

‘Thank you, Missy,’ said David at last. The others said nothing at all.

‘Thank me! I don’t want you to thank me at all. What have I done but rob you and pay you back again? No—I only want you—to forgive me—if you can!’

‘I do forgive you, my dear; but I forgave you long ago,’ said David, smoothing back her hair and kissing her upon the forehead.

‘You two forgive me, I know,’ she said, turning to the others. Arabella embraced her tearfully, but John William only laughed sardonically. What had he to forgive?

‘I knew you did. So now there is only one thing more that I want to send me away happy.’

‘Send you away! Where to? You’ve only just come,’ cried Mr. Teesdale, as loud as he dared; but even as he spoke he

remembered the special difficulty of the occasion, and his face twitched with the pain. 'Why, where did you think of going to?' he added, wiping his lips with his red pocket-handkerchief.

'Back to the Dandenong Ranges. I'm so happy there, you don't know! Thought I'd left? Not me, don't you believe it. No, I must get back to my work as quick as I can. And you'll be able to sit in quietness and look out through the gun-room window'—she pointed to the gun-room door—'and across the river-timber to them blue ranges, and you'll be able to say, "Missy's working there. She's honest now, whatever she was once; and she's trying to make up for her whole life." Yes, and you may say, "She's trying to make up for it all, and it was us that taught her; it was us that took her out of hell and gave her a glimpse of the other thing!" That's what you'll be able to say, Mr. Teesdale. And I'll know you're looking at the ranges, and I'll think you're looking at me, every evening in the summer-time, and every dinner-time all the year round. They ain't so blue as they look, when you get there—I guess the sky isn't either when you get *there*—but they're blue enough for Missy; they're blue enough for me.'

The tears were running down her face. John William had interjected, here and there, 'You're never going back at all.' But she had taken no notice of him; and when he repeated the same speech now, she shook her head and only sobbed the more.

'What is it that would send you away happy?' asked poor David; for he knew well what the answer was to be; and by now he was himself intensely agitated.

'I want some one else to forgive me, too,' said Missy, 'if it is not too late.' And she looked at the door that opened into the passage that led to Mrs. Teesdale's room. This door, also, was kept carefully closed.

'It is too late for you to see her; it would not be safe,' said Mr. Teesdale, sadly shaking his head. 'But she lies yonder at peace with all mankind; she has told me so herself. Rest assured that she forgives you, Missy.'

'She would forgive you with all her heart,' said Arabella. 'She has been so brave and good—and gentle—ever since she first fell ill. She would forgive you, Missy, as freely as my father has done.'

'She has forgiven you long ago,' declared John William. 'She spoke to me about you the morning after she had been to

see the doctor without telling us she was going. She spoke of you then without any bitterness; so she had forgiven you as long ago as that.'

Missy received these optimistic assurances with a look of dissatisfied doubt, as though she could accept no forgiveness that was not actual and absolute. Then her eyes found their way back to the passage door; and she could scarce believe them. She sprang backward with a cry of fear. The other three started also with one accord—so that the room shook. For the door was open, and on the threshold, like a spectre, stood none other than the dying woman herself.

'Forgive you!' she said, in a crazy rattle of a voice. 'You!'

She entered without stumbling, shut the door behind her, and took two steps forward. They appeared the steps of a decrepit rather than a dying woman; but they brought her no nearer to Missy, who backed in terror towards the gun-room. Nor was poor Missy worse than any of the rest, who not one of them could put out a hand to uphold this tottering, terrible figure, so scared and shaken were they. And the old woman stood there in her bed-clothes, with a ghastly dew upon her emaciated face, and ordered the young girl out of the house.

'Forgive *you*!' she said. 'Go; how dare you come back? David—all of you—how dare you take her in—a common slut—with me on my deathbed? How long have you had her here, I wonder? Not long, I know, or I should ha' felt it—I should ha' known! Do you think I could have died in my bed with that—with *that* in the house? God forgive you all; and you, out you go. Do you hear? Go!'

She pointed to the gun-room door with a bony, quivering hand; and because the girl she abhorred was paralysed with horror, she brought that hand down passionately upon the table, so that the four sovereigns rang together, and she saw the gold and notes, and fiercely inquired where they came from.

But now at last David was supporting her in his arms, and he answered soothingly:

'They are twenty pounds that Missy borrowed from me when she was with us—I never told you about it. She has come to-night and paid them back to me. That's the only reason she is here. She has been all this time earning them, just to do something to atone.'

'Pah!' cried Mrs. Teesdale, stiffening herself in her husband's arms, and reaching her skinny hands to the notes and

gold. 'How came you to have twenty pounds to give her? How comes she to have them to give you back? How do you think she earned them? Shall I tell you how?' the poor woman screamed. 'They're the wages of sin—the wages of sin—of sin!' She snatched up gold and notes alike and flung the lot at the fire with all her feeble might. The gold went ringing round the whitened hearth. The notes fell short.

'Now go,' she said to Missy, her scream dropping to a whisper, 'and come back at your peril.'

Missy got her hat and jacket from the sofa, brushing the wall all the way, and never taking her eyes from that awful, menacing, death-smitten face. Then suddenly she plucked up courage, took one step forward, and stood in profound humility, mutely asking for that forgiveness which she was never to get. A strong hand, young Teesdale's, had laid hold of her arm from behind and given her strength.

David, too, was putting in a quavering word for her.

'She is going,' said he. 'She was going in any case. You are wrong about the money. She has earned it honestly, as a farm servant, like our Mary Jane. Can't you see how brown her face and hands are? We have all forgiven her, as we hope to be forgiven. Cannot you also forgive her, my dear, and let her go her ways in peace?'

The sick woman wavered, and for a moment the terrible gaze, transfixing Missy, turned, by comparison, almost soft. Then it shifted and fell upon the bearded face of him who was supporting the unhappy girl, and moment, mood, and chance were gone, all three, beyond redemption.

'John William,' said his mother, 'leave her alone. Do you hear me? Let her go!'

Nothing happened.

'Let her go!' screamed Mrs. Teesdale. 'Choose once and for all between us—your dying mother and—that—woman!'

At first nothing; then the man's hand dropped clear of the girl.

'Now go,' said the woman to the girl.

The girl fled into the gun-room, and so out into the night, only pausing to shut the doors behind her, one after the other. With the shutting of the outer door—it was not slammed—they heard the last of Missy.

'Now follow her,' said the mother to the man.

But the man remained.

CHAPTER XXI.

'FOR THIS CAUSE.'

Now there was nothing but wet grass between the gun-room window and the river-timber; and that way lay the Dandenong Ranges; therefore it was clearly Missy's way—until she stopped to think.

This was not until she had very nearly walked into the Yarra itself; it was only then that she came to know what she was doing, to consider what she must do next, and to recall coherently the circumstances of her last and final expulsion from the farmhouse of the Teesdales. Already it seemed to have happened hours ago, instead of minutes. The hat and jacket she had snatched up from the sofa were still upon her arm; she put them on now, because suddenly she had turned cold. Another moment and she could not have said on which arm she had carried them, she had carried them so short a time. Yet the deathly face and the deathlier voice of Mrs. Teesdale were as a horror of old standing; there was something so familiar about them; they seemed to have dwelt in her memory so long. But, indeed, her mind was in a mist, through which the remote and the immediate past loomed equally indistinct and far away.

The mist parted suddenly. One face shone through it with a baleful light. It was the dreadful face of Mrs. Teesdale.

'Dying!' exclaimed Missy, eyeing the face judicially in her mind. 'Dying? Not she—not now! She may have been dying; but she won't die now. No, I've saved her by dragging her off her deathbed to curse me and turn me out! I've heard of folks turning the corner like that. She was right enough, though. You can't blame her and call her unkind. The others are more to blame for going on being kind to one of my sort. No, she'd better not die now, she'd much better leave that to me.'

Her mind was in a mist. She tried to see ahead. She must live somewhere, and she must do something for her living. But what—but where?

There was one matter about which she had not spoken the truth even now; neither to Arabella, nor to John William, nor to Mr. Teesdale himself. That was the matter of her new home in

the Dandenong Ranges, where she said she had been so happy, they didn't know! It was no home at all. She was particularly wretched there. She had stayed on with one object alone; now that this was accomplished there would be no object at all in going back. She had not intended ever to return, when leaving; but then her intentions had gone no further than the paying back to Mr. Teesdale of the twenty pounds obtained from him once upon a time by fraud. This had been the be-all and end-all of her existence for many months past. It was strange to be without it now; but to go back without it, to that farm in the ranges, would be terrible. Yet go somewhere she must; and there was the work which she could do. They would give her that work again, and readily, as before; they would overwork her, bully her, speak hardly to her—but clothe her decently, feed her well, and pay her ten shillings a week, all as before. She must do some work somewhere. Then what and where else?

Her mind was in a mist.

She saw no future for herself at all, or none that would be tolerable now. If she had dreamt once of unanimous forgiveness at the farm—of getting work *there*, in the kitchen, in the cowshed—that dream had come to such utter annihilation that even the memory of it entered her head no more. And she wanted no work elsewhere. So why work at all? She had done enough. Rest was all she wanted now. It was the newborn desire of her heart; rest, and nothing more.

And here was the river at her feet; but that thought did not stay or crystallise just yet.

Before it came the thought of Melbourne and the old life, which parted the mind's mist with a lurid light. That old life need not necessarily be an absolutely wicked one. There were points about that old life, wicked or otherwise. It had warmth, colour, jingle and glare, abundant variety, and superabundant gaiety. But rest? And rest was all she wanted now—all. And the mist gathered again in her mind; but the river still ran at her feet.

The river! How little heed she had taken of it until this moment! She had watched without seeing it, but she noted everything now. That the rain must have stopped before her banishment from the house, since her dry clothes were dry still; that overhead there was more clear sky than clouds; that the clouds were racing past a sickle moon, overwhelming it now and then, like white waves

and a glistening rock ; that the wind was shivering and groaning through the river-timber, and that it had loosened her own hair ; that the river itself was strong, full, noisy and turbulent, and so close, so very close to her own feet.

She stooped, she knelt, she reached and touched it with her fingers. The river was certainly very cold and of so full a current that it swept the finger-tips out of the water as soon as they touched it. But this was only in winter-time. In summer it was a very different thing.

In summer-time the river was low and still and warm to the hand ; the grass upon the banks was dry and yellow ; the bottle-green trees were spotted and alive with the vivid reds, emeralds, and yellows of parrot, parrakeet, and cherry-picker ; and the blue sky pressed upon the interlacing branches, not only over one's head but under one's feet, if one stood where Missy was standing now and looked where she was looking. She was imagining all these things, as she had heard and seen and felt them many a time last summer. Last Christmas Day was the one she had especially in mind. It was so very hard to realise that it was the same place. Yet there was no getting over that fact. And Missy was closer than she knew to the spot where she had cast herself upon the ground and shut out sight and hearing until poor John William arrived upon the spot and brought about a little scene which she remembered more vividly than many a more startling one of her own unaided making. Poor Jack, indeed ! Since that day he had been daily in her thoughts, and always as poor Jack. Because he had got it into his head that he was in love—and with her—that was why he was to be pitied ; or rather, it was why she had pitied him so long, whom she pitied no longer. To-night—now, at any rate, as she stood by the river—of the two she pitied only herself.

To-night she had seen him again ; to-night he had carried her in his arms, but spoken no word of love to her ; to-night he had stood aside and allowed her to be turned out of the house by his mother who was not dying—not she.

It was as it should be ; it was also as she had prayed that it might be. He did not care. That was all. She only regretted she had so long tormented herself with the thought that he might, nay, that he did care. She felt the need of that torment now as keenly as though it had been a comfort. Without it, she was lonely and alone, and more than ever in need of rest.

Then, suddenly, she remembered how that very day—last

Christmas Day—in the gorgeous summer-time, but in this selfsame spot—the idea had come to her which was with her now. And her soul rose up in arms against herself for what she had not done last Christmas Day.

‘If only I had,’ she cried, ‘the trouble would have been over when it seems it was only just beginning. I shouldn’t have disgusted them as I did on purpose that very afternoon. A lot of good it did me! And they would all have forgiven me, when they found out. Even Mrs. Teesdale would have forgiven me then. And Jack—Jack—I shouldn’t have lived to know you never cared.’

She clasped her hands in front of her and looked up steadily at the moon. It was clear of the clouds now—a keen-edged sickle against a slaty sky; and such light as it shed fell full enough upon the thin brown face and fearless eyes of the nameless girl whom, as Missy, two or three simple honest folk had learnt to like so well that they could think of her kindly even when the black worst was known of her. Her lips moved—perhaps in prayer for those two or three—perhaps to crave forgiveness for herself; but they never trembled. Neither did her knees, though suddenly she knelt. And now her eyes were shut; and it seems, or she must have heard him, her ears also. She opened her eyes again, however, to look her last at sky and moon. But her eyes were full of tears. So she shut them tight, and, putting her hands in front of her, swung slowly forward.

It was then that John William stooped forward and caught her firmly by the waist; but, after a single shrill scream, the spirit left her as surely as it must had he never been there. . . . Only, it came back.

He had taken off his coat. She was lying upon it, while he knelt over her. The narrow moon was like a glory over his head.

‘Why did you do it?’ she asked him. ‘You might have let me get to rest when—when you didn’t care!’

‘I do care!’ he answered; ‘and I mean you to rest now all the days of your life—your new life, Missy. I have cared all the time. But now I care more than ever.’

‘Your father and ’Bella——’

‘Care as much as I do, pretty nearly, in their own way. Missy, dear, don’t you care, too,—for me?’

She looked at him gratefully through her starting tears. 'How can I help it? You picked me up out of the gutter between you; but it was you alone that kept me out of it, after I'd gone; because I sort of felt all the time that you cared. But oh, you must never marry me. I am thinking so of your mother! She will never, never forgive me; I couldn't expect it; and she is going to get quite better, you know—I feel sure that she is better already.'

He put his hand upon the hair that was only golden in the moonshine: he peered into the wan face with infinite sadness: for here it was that Missy was both right and wrong.

THE END.

At the Sign of the Ship.

NOTHING is less grateful to a penman than the exercise of writing many pages and then burning them. Many pages had I written for this *Ship* on a certain class, their quaint ignorance and contented boundless ineptitude. But one might as well complain that ladies wear unbecoming sleeves, or that razors will not shave. Why these, and a few other things, should be as they are, I am unable to imagine, but parading the defects of mankind will not work a cure. Meanwhile a lady, in the *Strand Magazine*, takes a gloomy view of the future of literature, and, as it is much more agreeable to be consolatory than pessimistic, I hasten to reassure her. Miss Frances H. Low has asked a number of famous people what books they read in boyhood. She has also had a kind of census taken by the masters of 'middle class and upper middle class' schools, and she is distressed by the contrast between what the ordinary boy now reads and the chosen literature, in boyhood, of men at present great, such as Mr. Gladstone. The schoolboys read 'Kingston, and Ballantyne the Brave,' and the valiant Henty, none of them exactly favourite authors, I admit, of my own. They also study various cheap magazines, and *Huckleberry Finn* and *Tom Sawyer*. Having just perused the memoirs of Master Sawyer, for the fourth time, with keen excitement, and panting for another turn at Huck Finn, the Red-handed, I am not able here to censure the puerile taste. 'Robbery under Arms' is also dear to the contemporary boy, 'and what for no?' 'Starlight is my darling, the young buccaneer.' 'Eric, or Little by Little,' I never could thole, and marvel that any boy can tolerate him. But *David Copperfield* surely is no contemptible work, nor are *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* to be sneered at. *Dick Cheveley* I have still to read, but *Tom Brown's Schooldays* is a British classic. When boys love *The Superfluous Woman*, and fondly peruse *Ships that pass in the Night*,

then, and not till then, I shall begin to despair of boys and of everything.

* * *

The clever people consulted by Miss Low did not read these works, because they were not written when the clever people were boys. They read very good books: *The Arabian Nights*, *Gulliver*, Sir Walter; and Professor Dowden was allured by *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a far better book than the superior world supposes. Professor Dowden also 'got a vivid feeling of the power of style from Tacitus,' of whose style Professor Dowden's *Life of Shelley* does not much remind one. I long to find him imitating the author of the *Annals*. 'That excellent book *Télémaque* gave me' (Professor Dowden) 'great pleasure.' I did not care for *Télémaque* myself, but the difficulty of an alien language may have stood in my way. Professor Huxley liked Mungo Park's *Travels*—who does not?—and the *Apocrypha*, though he must, even then, have regarded the statements in *Tobit* as 'tough.' Lord Wolseley 'didn't care for the heroes of other nations;' perhaps he had not a stumpy fat collection of Napoleon Anecdotes, or he must have doted on the great Emperor, with his shoes down at heel, and already as a schoolboy making love. That was a really delightful book. Mr. Lecky was fond of 'Homer's *Iliad*.' 'I believe it *is* the best,' as Douglas Jerrold said. Sir Henry Thompson, like Scott, was pleased with 'The Wars of the Jews.' It is very nice, even in *Naomi, or the Last Days of Jerusalem*. Many of the clever people liked *The Pilgrim's Progress*, but the New Boy is unacquainted with Apollyon, and with that byway into Hell where innocent poor old Ignorance marched so gaily. Mr. Alfred Austin felt what he ought to have felt when he learned how 'The stag at eve had drunk his fill,' not at 'Monar's rill,' by the way, but at Monan's. But even then Mr. Austin preferred to books 'a certain receptive vacancy.' He was no bookworm. Mr. Gladstone clung to Froissart, Sir Walter, and *The Arabian Nights*. Mr. Ruskin loved *Harry and Lucy*, a most excellent work, like all Miss Edgeworth's books. *Rosamond* is capital—I don't care who sneers at the dear heroine of the *Purple Jar*. As for *Robinson Crusoe*, he was read to me so often before I could read that I have never perused his adventures. M. Daudet loved *Robinson*, also *M. Midshipman Aisé*. M. Daudet's literary heart has ever been in the right place, but did he never try *Pierre Simple*? Mr. Besant got into early

trouble from an exuberant boyish appreciation of Charles II. as the father of his people, in *Peveril*.

* * *

Well, the boys of middle-class schools prefer Kingston and Ballantyne and cheap magazines to the classics of romance. But we need not despair. Bookish people are bookish, and know what is good and right as soon as they can read at all. The born bookworm reads everything, as Macaulay did. To be personal (and surely there is no vainglory in calling oneself a bookworm), I distinctly remember Shakspeare and the *Family Herald*, Poe, Thackeray, Dickens, Scott, Marryat, and *The Boy Crusoes*, Carlyle, and *The Little Savage*, and *Masterman Ready*, and *Rosamond*, and *Mr. Verdant Green*, and Cooper, and Swift at random, and Addison, Goldsmith, and *The Wide, Wide World*, yea, and *Queechy*, as literary joys of my infancy. Good, bad, or indifferent, all printed paper was welcome, and, no doubt, other bookworms might make the same confession. But, when we are asked for our favourites, we bring out the English classics, and forget what answered in our youth to *Sherlock Holmes* and to the *Ludgate Monthly*. Thus the public and Miss Frances Low think that all boys were literary in our infancy, while now no boys are literary. This is a fallacy. The other boys were not reading boys then, any more than they are now. These middle-class schoolboys, with their honest and rather creditable tastes, are not going to grow up into generals, prime ministers, professors, critics, poets, like my Lord Wolseley, Mr. Gladstone, Professor Dowden, Mr. William Rossetti, and Mr. Alfred Austin. They are going to be clerks, tradesmen, dentists, and so forth. It is not fair to pit them against the very minute minority, the winnowed remnant of clever people. Besides, boys read what they find handy. In illiterate households they do not find the pick of English literature, as more fortunate boys do. The clever boys had fathers who read, or had read, or at least who possessed, good books, so the clever boys read the good books. The ordinary boy's ordinary parent reads the newspapers, and the boy himself buys what is cheap and contemporary—shilling tales, illustrated magazines, *Three Men in a Boat*. If a boy grew up among the Waverley Novels he would read them, if he cared for reading. But only one boy in a hundred cares for reading. On a wet day a boy may be driven to what he can pick up—generally, of course, it is trash. This is not the fault of the rising generation, but of

the risen generation. 'What, in the name of the Bodleian,' asks Mr. Birrell in a noble paragraph, 'has the general public to do with literature?' The general public has nothing to do with literature; but, in spite of that, the right boy will find his way to the right books. 'As for the girls, their tastes are hopeless,' says Miss Low. One can easily believe it; yet there are exceptions, and one has known instances of literary sagacity in the girl. The central fact, however, is that the persons, children or men, who read the best books are, and have been, and will be, an insignificant, but a noisy, minority. If Miss Low wishes to compare the new with the old generation, let her appeal for reminiscences, not to the fine flower of modern wits—Mr. William Rossetti, Professor Dowden, Mr. Gladstone—but to the worthy fathers of the boys in the middle-class schools. What was *their* favourite reading? Mr. Bracebridge Hemyng, and *Bell's Life*, and Harrison Ainsworth.

* * *

In spite of this defence of the British boy, as not one whit more illiterate than his father who begat him, I certainly do marvel that, if a lad can get Marryat as easily as Kingston, he should prefer the latter, or any contemporary writer for boys, to the creator of *Peter Simple* and *Mr. Midshipman Easy*. The good Captain, our old friend, is as much superior to modern authors of boys' books of maritime adventure as Fielding is to the author of *The Yellow Aster*. And Marryat has no erudition to puzzle boys, no tedious passages to repel them. He writes of what he saw and knew, with humour, spirit, sympathy, kindness. He was a part of those great national deeds which he records; but if boys won't read him one cannot help it. 'The newest tale is ever the sweetest in the ears of men,' says Homer, and *Peter Simple* is not new. But it will endure when the new tales are pulp. Observing, too, that *Treasure Island* does not occur among the boys' favourites, one is driven to suppose that 'the style bores the *abonné*,' and that to be a really good book is a great handicap to the success of a work of fiction. But here one is lapsing again into the pessimism which (in deference to my friend Mr. Grant Allen) I am always trying to master.

* * *

Some recent remarks of an historical sort in *The Catholic World* exercise me a good deal. Some one had made the remark, by no

means novel, that the Scotch came well out of the affair of Jeanne d'Arc, having been her comrades in her latest victory, and guiltless of deserting her, condemning her, and burning her. *The Catholic Review* says that, if my countrymen did not betray Jeanne, 'the omission was merely accidental,' and, had the Maid been betrayed fifty or sixty years later, the Scots 'would have been there to see.' They *were* 'there to see' what they could not prevent; but why this reference to 'fifty or sixty years later'? What difference could that lapse of time have made?

The Catholic World goes on to taunt us with the surrender of Charles I. 'to a fate as certain,' for 'a valuable consideration.' Every one knows that the fate was *not* as 'certain;' that it surprised both countries, that the Scots made an invasion of England in defence of their King; but, of course, Hamilton was no match for Cromwell. I am not defending the Scots for accepting the 'consideration'—their arrears of pay. They could not stay in England, nor could they beard the Covenanting ministers, and take the King back to Scotland. But all this did not quite happen 'fifty or sixty years' after 1430. Apparently *The Catholic World* is of that opinion; if not, why the mysterious reference to 'fifty or sixty years'? The Scots who sold their King for a groat were Presbyterians; there was a point for a Catholic critic to make. The melancholy results of the Shorter Catechism on national character might have been regretted. Much more than sixty years after 1430 my countrymen were massacring Protestants in the St. Bartholomew, so far did they carry their fidelity to the Auld Alliance. Does this not plead for them with *The Catholic World*?

* * *

INFAMOUS BEHAVIOUR OF A SALMON.

He was a Scotch salmon of the Tay. The angler was a fellow-countryman, and thirsty. The angler, having his rod in his hand, and his fly in the water, had his flask in his hand too, unstoppered. At that critical moment the salmon, deaf to the calls of hospitality, rose, and the angler dropped his flask, and lost his fish, and, worst of all, broke his flask. In a former state of existence this salmon must have been Menteith or Assynt, a double-dyed traitor. But lecturers on temperance are perfectly at liberty to make a tract, with a picture, out of this melancholy anecdote, *Lost, or the Whisky Drinker's Doom*—if it *was* whisky that the

flask contained. It may have been milk—perhaps it was—but nothing excuses the behaviour of that fish, and few accidents of angling are more vexatious.

* * *

Harking back to criticism, is it not an edifying fact that the very volume of *The Edinburgh Review* which opens with 'This will never do,' 'this' being Wordsworth's *Excursion*, contains a most laudatory article on another poem, *The Paradise of Coquettes*? Perhaps not one human being who reads this line ever so much as heard of *The Paradise of Coquettes* (1815). To judge by extracts it is dull, heavy, stupid, unmelodious, unredeemed, a bungling imitation of Pope with none of his wit. 'This author,' says the contemner of Wordsworth, 'may drop his mask when he pleases, and place his name among the few classical writers of this scribbling generation,' the generation of Scott, Byron, Keats, Coleridge, Lamb, Shelley, Crabbe, and 'the author of the very worst poem ever printed in quarto,' Wordsworth. The same *Edinburghs*, all in a flutter at Napoleon's escape from Elba, abandon themselves to despair and abuse of the Government. But, in October, when Blücher and the Duke had crushed the Emperor, the *Edinburgh* only mentions Waterloo in an incidental allusion. Such was Whig patriotism, such is party spirit. I am sure that the author of *The Paradise of Coquettes* was a Whig.

* * *

The modern heroine, poor girl! is vastly to be pitied. Dodo, and the Yellow Aster of her sex, and the Superfluous Woman, and the rest of them must sympathise with the following verses of Miss May Kendall's. The old heroines did not knock down their aunts, nor dance on their baby's grave, nor get into an unintelligible frenzy of outraged morality by way of welcoming the little stranger. Hysterics were not their daily pastime. So they married great strong, brave, handsome heroes, and lived happy ever afterwards: as is our reasonable duty. Would that the other new young women were within reach of Miss Diana Vernon's hunting whip!

THE COMPLAINT OF THE HEROINE OF FICTION.

I once had lovely golden hair,
 Or raven hair—no matter which—
 I was as good and sweet and fair
 As any angel in a niche.

Or if I did a little wrong,
 It was to prove me human still ;
 My feelings were extremely strong,
 But I had disciplined my will.

A change has come—and what a change !
 With awful problems I am vexed,
 From crime to crime I reckless range,
 I know not what will happen next.
 From frantic woe to frantic bliss,
 From frantic wrath to frantic glee—
 I never wished to be like this !
 I can't make out what's come to me !

Gone are my gaiety and cheer,
 Gone is my hero, bold and true ;
 In my hysterical career,
 I very often long for you !
 Now me, all other woes above,
 My bitter destiny compels
 To wed a man I do not love,
 Then fall in love with some one else.

Yet me how would you recognise,
 O Hero, if you met me now ?
 What scorn would lighten from your eyes,
 And corrugate your manly brow !
 The modern hero I have found,
 Upon the whole, I do not like ;
 He's either stupid or unsound,
 And if *I* were not worse, I'd strike.

But I *am* worse—I never guessed
 How bad I could be till I tried,
 Compelled too often to arrest
 My headlong course by suicide.
 And though I cease from guilt and slang,
 A fresh reprieve I fain would beg—
 For other authors seem to hang
 Theories on me like a peg.

AT THE SIGN OF THE SHIP.

Ah, yet I long a little share
Of happiness and love to find;
Again I would be gay and fair,
Loyal, and chivalrous, and kind!
Ah! do not bid me rant and rave,
Ah! do not bid me preach and bore;
Give back my Hero true and brave,
Whom I shall love for evermore!

MAY KENDALL.

* * *

A correspondent has kindly sent, and I have characteristically mislaid, some cases of handling and treading on fire, unharmed, from the aboriginal races of India. Mrs. Wesley, mother of the famous John and Charles, says that she 'waded the fire' when the Rectory was burning, but that escape of hers was in answer to prayer, and belongs to a different class of marvel.

A. LANG.

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